

Library of the Theological Seminary,

PRINCETON, N. J.

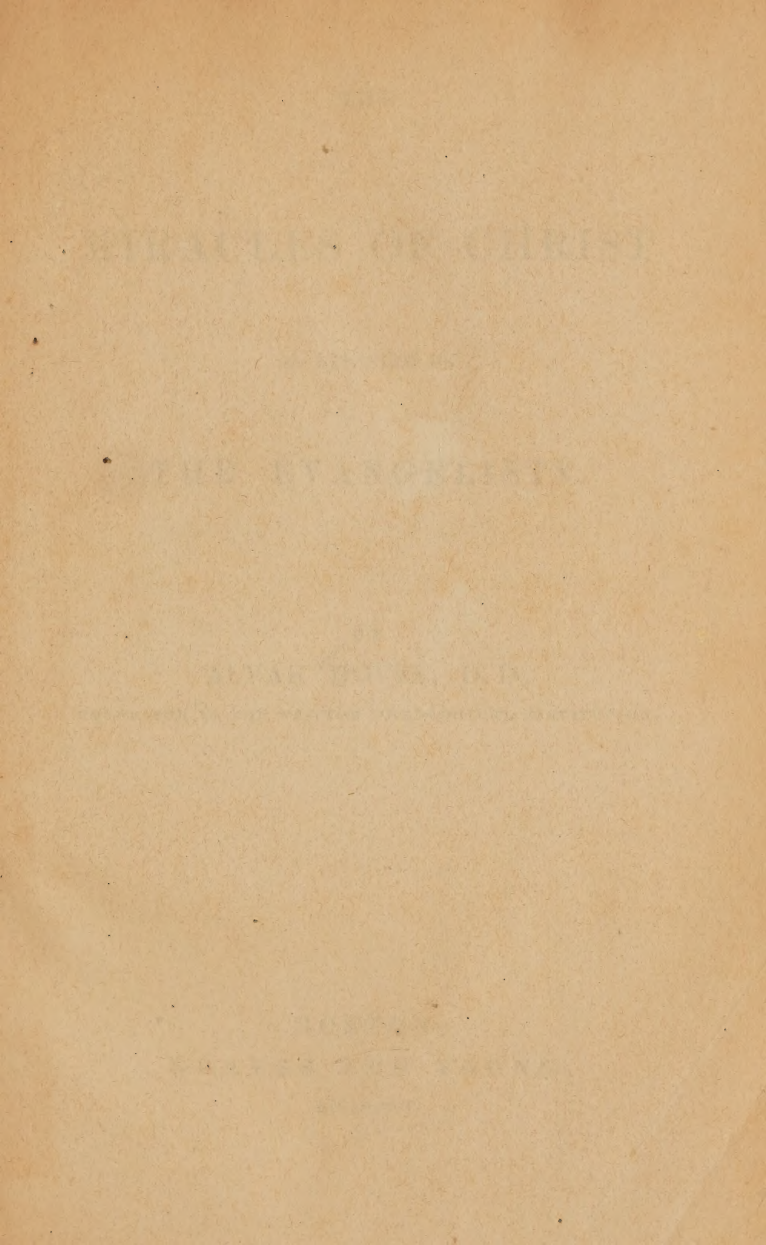
Presented by

BT 365 .H68 1864

Hovey, Alvah, 1820-1903.

The miracles of Christ as
attested by the evangelists

Shelf.....



THE
MIRACLES OF CHRIST

AS ATTESTED BY
THE EVANGELISTS.

BY
ALVAH ✓ HOVEY, D. D.,
PROFESSOR IN THE NEWTON THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION.

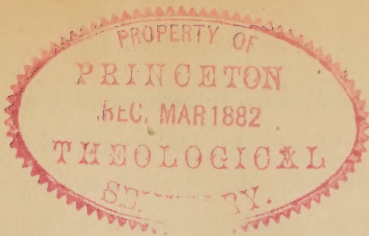
BOSTON:
GRAVES AND YOUNG.

MDCCCLXIV.

1864

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1863, by
ALVAH HOVEY,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

RIVERSIDE, CAMBRIDGE:
STEREOTYPED AND PRINTED BY H. O. HOUGHTON.



PREFACE.

To exhibit the testimony of the Evangelists to the miracles of Christ is the chief purpose of this work. A careful survey of this testimony, — noting points of agreement and difference between the several writers, the fairness and minuteness with which they relate the events in question, and the abortive attempts which have been made to impeach their veracity, — must be acceptable to those who are seeking a knowledge of our Saviour's life. The following pages, it is hoped, will be found to comprise such a survey, — preceded by an Introduction, pointing out the fallacy of scientific and philosophical objections to miracles, and followed by a conclusion characterizing the evangelical testimony, as learned from this survey.

In harmony with the purpose named above,

attention has also been directed to the occasions and import of the particular miracles wrought by Christ; for the effect of testimony is much greater when the events which it affirms comport with the known character of their alleged author, than when they do not. Moreover, this feature of the work will possess an interest for the reader quite independent of its relation to the main argument, and will render the volume in most respects equivalent to a commentary. The writer considers himself greatly indebted to the Cambridge sermons of Mr. Westcott, on "Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles," for several extracts contributing to the value of this part of his work.

Although the following examination rests everywhere upon the original text of the Gospels, the use of Greek terms has, with a very few exceptions, been avoided, and the entire argument has been put within the reach of every thoughtful person. It is, however, important for the reader to have before him a Harmony of the Gospels, that he may compare different narratives of the same miracle, and may verify the results here given. The work of Dr. Rob-

inson, in Greek or English, will be found very convenient and reliable.

It may be proper to add that the investigation which is now submitted to the public was undertaken for the benefit of students in the Institution, and that traces of the use to which it has been applied will perhaps now and then appear in the style.

May He to whom is committed all power in heaven and upon earth, deign to accept this imperfect offering, and make it useful to his Church and the world!

Newton Centre, 1863.

CONTENTS.



INTRODUCTION.

	PAGE
OBJECTIONS TO MIRACLES REFUTED, . . .	11-32



PART FIRST.

MIRACLES ON NATURE,	33-101
-------------------------------	--------

CHAPTER I.

<i>Miracles of Absolute Control,</i>	33-77
§ I. The first miraculous draught of fishes. Luke v. 1-11, (cf. Matt. iv. 18-22; Mark i. 16-20),	34-41
§ II. The second miraculous draught of fishes. John xxi. 1, sq.	41-47
§ III. The stater in the fish's mouth. Matt. xvii. 24-27,	47-51
§ IV. The stilling of the tempest. Matt. viii. 23-27; Mark iv. 36-41; Luke viii. 22-25, . . .	51-58
§ V. Christ walking upon the sea. Matt. xiv. 22-36; Mark vi. 45-56; John vi. 15-21, . . .	58-68
§ VI. Judgment of the fruitless fig-tree. Matt. xxi. 18-22; Mark xi. 12-14; 20-26, . . .	68-77

CHAPTER II.

	PAGE
<i>Miracles of Creative Power,</i>	78-101
§ I. The changing of water into wine. John ii. 1-12,	78-87
§ II. Feeding the five thousand. Matt. xiv. 13-21; Mark vi. 30-44; Luke ix. 10-17; John vi. 1-14,	87-94
§ III. Feeding the four thousand. Matt. xv. 32-39; Mark viii. 1-9,	94-101

PART SECOND.

MIRACLES ON MAN,	102-264
----------------------------	---------

CHAPTER I.

<i>Healing Mortal Sicknesses,</i>	102-131
§ I. Healing the nobleman's son. John iv. 46-54,	102-112
§ II. Healing Peter's mother-in-law. Matt. viii. 14 -17; Mark i. 29-34; Luke iv. 38-41,	112-121
§ III. Healing a dropsical man. Luke xiv. 1-6,	121-125
§ IV. Healing the centurion's servant. Matt. viii. 5-13; Luke vii. 1-10,	125-131

CHAPTER II.

<i>Healing Chronic Diseases,</i>	132-182
§ I. Healing a paralytic in Capernaum. Matt. ix. 1-8; Mark ii. 1-12; Luke v. 17-26,	132-141
§ II. Restoring the withered hand. Matt. xii. 9- 13; Mark iii. 1-5; Luke vi. 6-11,	141-152
§ III. Healing the infirm man. John v. 1, sq.	152-162
§ IV. Healing the infirm woman. Luke xiii. 10-17,	162-164

§ V. Healing the woman with a bloody flux. Matt.	
ix. 20-22; Mark v. 25-34; Luke viii.	
43-48,	164-172
§ VI. Healing a leper. Matt. viii. 1-4; Mark i.	
40-45; Luke v. 12-16,	172-177
§ VII. Healing ten lepers. Luke xvii. 11-19, . .	177-182

CHAPTER III.

<i>Curing Organic Defects</i> ,	183-202
§ I. Curing two blind men. Matt. ix. 27-31, .	183-185
§ II. Healing a blind man at Bethsaida. Mark viii.	
22-26,	185-189
§ III. Healing a deaf-mute. Mark vii. 31-37,	
(cf. Matt. xv. 29-31),	189-190
§ IV. Healing the man who was born blind. John	
ix. 1-41,	190-197
§ V. Curing two blind men at Jericho. Matt. xx.	
29-34; Mark x. 46-52; Luke xviii.	
35-43,	197-202

CHAPTER IV.

<i>Healing Demoniacs</i> ,	203-240
§ I. Healing a demoniac in the synagogue of	
Capernaum. Mark i. 21-28; Luke iv.	
31-37,	207-213
§ II. Healing a blind and dumb demoniac. Matt.	
xii. 22-37; Luke xi. 14-23, (cf. Mark	
iii. 19-30),	213-217
§ III. Healing the two demoniacs of Gadara. Matt.	
viii. 28-34; ix. 1; Mark v. 1-21; Luke	
viii. 26-40,	217-226
§ IV. A dumb demoniac restored. Matt. ix. 32-34,	226

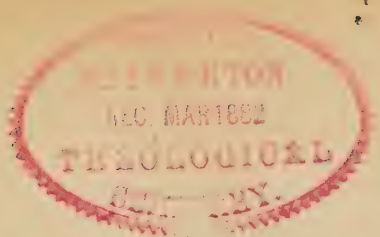
§ V. Healing the daughter of the Syro-Phœnician woman. Matt. xv. 21 - 28; Mark vii. 24 - 30,	226 - 232
§ VI. Healing the lunatic boy. Matt. xvii. 14 - 21; Mark ix. 14 - 29; Luke ix. 37 - 43,	232 - 240

CHAPTER V.

<i>Raising the Dead</i> ,	241 - 264
§ I. Raising Jairus' daughter to life. Matt. ix. 18 - 26; Mark v. 22 - 43; Luke viii. 41 - 56,	241 - 249
§ II. Raising the widow's son at Nain. Luke vii. 11 - 17,	249 - 251
§ III. Raising Lazarus from the dead. John xi. 1 - 46,	251 - 264

PART THIRD.

MIRACLES ON HIS OWN BODY,	265 - 300
§ I. Transfiguration of Christ. Matt. xvii. 1 - 13; Mark ix. 2 - 13; Luke ix. 28 - 36 (cf. 2 Peter i. 16 - 18; John i. 14),	265 - 271
§ II. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Matt. xxviii. 1, sq.; Mark xvi. 1, sq.; Luke xxiv. 1, sq.; John xx. 1, sq.; 1 Cor. xv. 1, sq.	271 - 300
CONCLUDING REMARKS,	300 - 319



INTRODUCTION.

By a miracle we mean an event which, according to the principles of sound reasoning, may and must be referred to the extraordinary agency of God. No event, therefore, which evidently disagrees with the moral character of God; no event which can be reasonably traced to angelic, demoniac, or human action; no event which may be fairly ascribed to the working of natural laws or forces, is a miracle; but an event which, in view of its character and circumstances, can rationally be referred to extraordinary divine action, and to that alone, as its cause, is properly miraculous. By saying, "to that alone," we do not mean to exclude the coöperation of natural forces in producing such an event, but rather to affirm that such forces, if used, are directed and reinforced by

extraordinary divine action, which superior action determines the event.¹

As, however, the occurrence of such an event has been pronounced to be to the last degree improbable, and, indeed, morally impossible, we shall notice briefly the grounds of such a judgment, before examining the testimony for the miracles of Christ; for the result of our examination of this testimony will be affected more or less by our opinion as to the antecedent probability of miracles. If we are satisfied of their being "to the last degree improbable," we shall yield but a reluctant assent to the fullest proof of their reality; but if we find them to be in certain circumstances "not improbable," a less amount of evidence will be convincing. We shall,

¹ Hugh Farmer says, "A miracle is an effect produced in the system of nature, contrary to the general rule by which it is governed;" Tillotson says, "It is a supernatural effect, evident and wonderful to sense;" Wardlaw, "A work involving a temporary suspension of the known laws of nature;" Alexander, "A visible suspension of the laws of nature;" Mansel, "An interposition of divine power;" Bayne, "An occasional display of divine power, independently of those sequences of natural law through which God commonly acts;" McCosh, "An event which is wrought in our world as a sign or proof of God making a supernatural revelation to man;" and Farrar, "An effect wrought by the direct interposition of the Creator and Governor of nature, for the purpose of revealing a message or attesting a revelation."

therefore, at this point review the principal arguments in favor of rejecting all testimony for miracles, — stating these arguments, for the sake of brevity, in our own words, and in the simplest manner possible.

I. Many alleged miracles are known to be spurious, and therefore it is safe to infer that all are spurious. Says David Hume: “The many instances of forged miracles and prophecies and supernatural events, which in all ages have either been detected by contrary evidence, or which detect themselves by their absurdity, prove sufficiently the strong propensity of mankind to the extraordinary and marvellous, and ought reasonably to beget a suspicion against all relations of this kind.” And so frequently, he declares, have miracles been forged in support of “popular religions,” that “we may establish it as a maxim, that no human testimony can have such force as to prove a miracle, and make it a just foundation for any such system of religion.”¹

Now we are ready to admit the premise of this argument, but not the inference which is drawn from it. The fact asserted may be said, with more show of reason, to justify an

¹ Essays, Vol. II. pp. 118, 128.

opposite conclusion; for, generally, the spurious presupposes the genuine; the counterfeit imitates the true. One exception may, indeed, be imagined to this rule, and we think of but one. If a prince, for example, were to announce beforehand his purpose to issue, when needed, a particular coin, with such and such marks, counterfeits of this promised coin might, doubtless, be put in circulation before, as well as after, its own appearance. An expectation, resting on the known purpose of their ruler, would predispose many persons to receive as genuine, without sufficient scrutiny, a worthless imitation of the predicted coin. So in the case of miracles. If God has wrought sundry miracles in past times, or if he has authorized us by a secret bias of our spiritual nature to expect them, the hasty assent given by multitudes to pretended miracles is explicable — but not otherwise. Hence this indiscreet assent does really establish a presumption in favor of the occurrence of miracles in the course of human history, while at the same time the acknowledged presence of counterfeits in that history warns us to scrutinize keenly the claims of any event to a miraculous char-

acter. "The propensity of men," remarks Dr. Channing, "to believe in what is strange and miraculous, though a presumption against particular miracles, is not a presumption against miracles universally, but rather the reverse ; for great principles of human nature have generally a foundation in truth, and one explanation of this propensity so common to mankind is obviously this, that in the earlier ages of the human race, miraculous interpositions, suited to man's infant state, were not uncommon, and, being the most striking facts of human history, they spread through all future times a belief and expectation of miracles."¹ The currency of false miracles, we repeat, shows that mankind have been favored, or may justly expect to be favored, with true ones, while it admonishes them to beware of deception in this matter.

II. Miracles are inconsistent with the observed uniformity of nature, and are therefore incredible. Of the countless millions of events which have taken their place in the world's history at any moment since the cre-

¹ Dudleian Lecture at Cambridge, *Works*, Vol. III. p. 109, sq. This discourse abounds in valuable thoughts.

ation, all, with the rarest exceptions, have been confessedly due to natural causes, and it may therefore be safely inferred that the few events considered exceptional were either illusions, or were due to such causes. "The entire range of the inductive philosophy," says Baden Powell, "is at once based upon, and every instance tends to confirm by immense accumulation of evidence, the grand truth of the universal order and constancy of natural causes as a primary law of belief; so strongly entertained and fixed in the mind of every truly inductive inquirer, that he can hardly even conceive the possibility of its failure."¹ The well known argument of David Hume rests also on the experienced uniformity of nature. He defines a miracle to be an event "*contrary* to uniform experience," and seeks no deeper basis for his rejection of such an event as incredible.

If the premise of this argument merely signifies that few events in the world's history have been strictly miraculous, we are ready to adopt it. Our definition of a miracle, as an event which may and must be ascribed to *extraordinary* divine action, implies

¹ Recent Inquiries in Theology, p. 122, sq.

this. But we do not find in such a statement any basis for the conclusion. The fact that few events, if any, are miraculous, no more proves that none are miraculous, than the fact that few mountains are volcanoes proves that none are volcanoes; the *nature* of the proof is the same in both cases; only the *degree* of it is higher in the former instance than in the latter.

Besides, one of the chief ends for which miracles are affirmed to have been wrought, namely, to authenticate a special revelation from God, seems to forbid their indefinite multiplication. Customary events are not the fittest credentials for an extraordinary messenger; and it has been urged with much ingenuity, that miracles would lose their distinctive character and their evidential force if they were to be wrought regularly and often. They would certainly lose in a great measure their power to excite general attention, and so also their practical value in attesting the claims of a messenger from God. Hence, if the chief end to be accomplished by miracles is borne in mind, it will appear that their infrequency, as compared with natural events, does not by itself estab-

lish the slightest presumption against their occurrence at certain crises in the history of mankind.

But if the statement that all events, with the rarest exceptions, are due to the operation of natural causes, signifies that they occur independently of any power acting from without and above the laws of matter and necessary causation, we do not accept the statement as true. For within certain narrow limits man himself is free, and has power to act upon the forces and sequences of material nature,—to disturb them, to resist them, to combine them, to guide them, to reinforce them; and hence his action is somewhat akin to the miraculous action of God: it is the working of a free power upon the blind forces of nature; a power which is able by controlling, by supplementing, or by overpowering them, to carry into effect its own purpose. And if we bear in mind the great number of events which are not determined by the laws of nature, as just explained, but are due to the agency of man, the foundation of the argument before us becomes unstable, and the structure built upon it falls. For though it may still be granted that a

vast majority of events do take place according to the laws of nature, it is nevertheless certain that innumerable events are determined by the free agency of man, and so the inference against miracles falls to the ground.¹

Besides, the facts of science testify of great crises in the history of our planet, when new orders of being were originated. There have been creative epochs in the natural world; why not then in the moral? "All these beings," says Professor Agassiz of the origin of animals, "do not exist in consequence of the continued agency of physical causes, but have made their successive appearance upon the earth by the immediate intervention of the Creator." "Miracles!" exclaims Professor Hitchcock, "Why all the great chapters of nature's history begin with them, and if the Christian dispensation were destitute of them, it would be out of harmony with the course of things in the natural world."²

III. The laws of nature are divine, and

¹ See Bushnell, *Nature and the Supernatural*, Ch. III., IX., XI., and Nitzsch, *Studien und Kritiken*, 1843.

² *Bib. Sac.* July, 1863, p. 552. The passage from Agassiz is borrowed from the excellent article of Dr. Hitchcock.

therefore inviolable. For God to disturb them, is for him to repudiate his own work, and silence the voice of his own revelation. In the language of Goethe: "An audible voice from heaven could not convince me that water burns; I rather hold this to be blasphemy against the great God and his revelation in nature." This objection is urged with strong confidence by certain rationalists, and may be deemed their principal argument against miracles. It will therefore be proper for us to scan it closely, and see if it is at all decisive. The expression, "laws of nature," is ambiguous, and needs to be defined. The term "laws" may be taken, in this connection, to signify the regular successions of cause and effect, or antecedent and consequent, which obtain in the universe; and the term "nature" may be taken to signify all *created* being. Nature is said to be everywhere and always constant in her operations; the same causes producing uniformly the same effects. To set aside a law of nature is then, we are assured, to sever the tie between cause and effect, and disturb the order of the universe. This is an act which God cannot be supposed in any circumstances to

perform. By so doing he would condemn his own works and proclaim his own imperfection.

This objection, we remark, in the first place, assumes the competency of human reason to determine what sort of a creation is worthy of God; for it virtually asserts that any creation worthy of him must issue from his hand so perfect in all its forces and adjustments as to render any subsequent interposition needless. The originating act must be first and final, inserting powers and establishing ordinances which cannot be moved. The Allwise, having cut short his work, must henceforth hold himself aloof from his own creation, or enter it secretly through the channels of rigid law. A universe so constituted as to welcome, now and then, a fresh impulse from the divine hand, a new display of sovereign power, proving to the awed spirits of men that God is more than a principle of order or causation or development; that He is a holy and loving Father, greater even than the temple of nature,—such a universe, we say, is vilified by this objection as imperfect and morally impossible. For what else can be meant by declaring the assertion of a miracle to be “blasphemy

against the great God and his revelation in nature ? ” The assumption respecting the power of human reason which underlies the objection, is an ample refutation of it. For how weak is our reason in its best estate ! How dim our spiritual vision because of sin ! The idea of man pronouncing an *à priori* judgment on plans of creation and providence is preposterous. It is enough for him to discover and adore the wisdom of God as actually manifested, without pretending to limit the action of Jehovah to particular modes and channels.¹

It should, however, be clearly understood, in the second place, that to affirm the occurrence of “events which may and must be ascribed to extraordinary Divine action,” is

¹ Compare the remarks of Professor Rothe (*Studien und Kritiken*, 1858, p. 40) on another point: “To deny the possibility of recognizing with *certainty*, in one case, any event as a miracle, because this would presuppose an *absolutely perfect* knowledge of nature, which no man can claim, is also characteristic. For from the bearing of those men, who urge this point with so much pathos, one must certainly conclude that the possibility denied by them exists. How otherwise could they, with such assurance, *absolutely* deny the reality of many miracles related in the Bible, a denial which, upon their stand-point, presupposes in them an *absolute certainty* that those accounts describe *supernatural* events ? ”

by no means to affirm that events have taken place which were not included in the eternal purpose of God and provided for in the make of the universe. To suppose them an afterthought would be to impeach his omniscience; to suppose them arbitrary, or not grounded in reason, would be to question his wisdom; to suppose them lawless or irregular, that is, now wrought and then omitted in circumstances exactly alike, would be to charge him with caprice; but the Christian Doctrine of Miracles is burdened with no such hypothesis. It assigns to these events a place in the eternal plan and infinite reason of God, and believes them to occur in the exact line of spiritual order. "The laws of God's supernatural agency," says Dr. Bushnell, "are laws of reason, or such as respect his last end, and the best way of compassing that end; which laws are yet so stable and so universal, that he will always do exactly the same things in exactly the same circumstances or conditions."¹ Nor is it going too far to say that no one has shown this view to be erroneous. Deniers of miracles have for the most part ignored the Christian doc-

¹ *Nature and the Supernatural*, p. 340.

trine on this point, or else have assumed its falsehood as a postulate.

It should also be observed, in the third place, that miracles do not sever the relation between cause and effect, and thus violate, in any proper sense of the word, the essential order of nature. They do suppose the action of a cause *out of* nature, and able to direct, reinforce, or neutralize her powers; but they do not involve anything derogatory to those powers. They are beside nature and above nature, but not contrary to nature. This distinction, as old as Augustine, is not without force and propriety, when properly understood.¹ It means that miracles are at least in perfect harmony with the structure, the idea, and the end of creation. It means that inorganic laws are subordinate to organic, and organic laws to moral, in the plan and working of the universe,² and that the lower are not dishonored, but rather glorified by a fellowship, even of subordination, with the higher. Alone in their sphere, the laws or

¹ For remarks against this distinction, see Wardlaw *On Miracles*, § iv. p. 33, sq. His discussion of the point is ingenious and instructive, but not quite satisfactory.

² Compare Nitzsch, *Studien und Kritiken*, 1843, p. 39; Trench, *Notes on the Miracles*, p. 21, sq., and Wardlaw, cited above.

forces of inorganic matter act invariably, but when matter is made organic by life, higher laws prevail and the lower succumb. In obedience to the same principle, organic laws must yield to moral; for according to God's plan all other ends are tributary to moral ones in his creation. "The great purpose of God," says Dr. Channing, "in establishing the order of nature, is to form and advance the mind; and if the case should occur in which the interests of the mind could best be advanced by departing from this order, or by miraculous agency, then the great purpose of the creation, the great end of its laws and regularity, would demand such departure; and miracles, instead of *warring against*, would *concur* with nature."¹ Dr. Chalmers maintains that, properly speaking, miracles do not disturb the constancy of nature,—do not suspend the law of cause and effect. "A miracle," he remarks, "is no infringement of the order of cause and effect, for this special intromission of the Divine will is the introduction of a new cause, making the causal antecedent different from what it was before."²

¹ Dudleian Lecture at Cambridge.

² *Institutes of Theology*, Vol. I. p. 170, note.

"As the entrance of new personalities into the world," says Schenkel, "does not involve the destruction of those already present, so neither does the entrance into the world of absolute creative acts by the hand of God involve the destruction of existing natural connections." Again, "it cannot in fact be seen how the connection and order of nature should be *destroyed* by the creation of some loaves immediately by the power of God, in place of their being prepared by the hand of the baker, or by his freeing some persons who were sick from their disease by his direct agency, instead of their being healed by the virtues of medicine."¹ "But the laws of experience, on which in general our knowledge rests, how in the world," inquires Rothe, "can they be *endangered* by acts supernaturally wrought, *if these acts offer themselves expressly to experience as not caused by the course of nature?*"² "Miracles," observes McCosh, "may be said to be *against* nature or *not against* nature, according as we understand nature. They are *against* nature as they counteract natural action,—just as one nat-

¹ *Christliche Dogmatik*, Vol. I. pp. 258, 259.

² *Studien und Kritiken*, 1858, p. 29.

ural agent may be against another,—as water may counteract fire; but they are *not against* nature in the sense of being in opposition to the design of nature as a work of God.”¹ This much is certainly true, that miracles do not shake in the least degree the great principle that every change has a cause, and that the cause being the same in all respects, the effect will always be the same. The tie which binds together cause and effect is not therefore severed by any miracle however surprising.

We have now considered the principal reasons which may be thought by those who believe in a personal God to render the occurrence of miracles incredible or to the last degree improbable, and have found them to be not only unsatisfactory, but overbalanced by a general presumption in favor of some miraculously attested revelation from God. To those who deny the existence of a personal God, and, like Spinoza and Strauss, take refuge in pantheism, the foregoing remarks will have little weight. A deeper question than that respecting miracles concerns them. But for others there is a pre-

¹ *The Supernatural in Relation to the Natural*, p. 150, note.

sumption in favor of miracles as the proper vouchers for a divine revelation, though not for *many* such revelations. Hence the propriety of scrutinizing carefully the testimony for alleged miracles. Indeed, the objections which have been noticed, while they utterly fail of establishing a presumption against the occurrence of miracles in general, do seem to justify a very cautious sifting of the testimony in support of particular ones, lest counterfeits be welcomed as genuine.¹ We propose, therefore to examine with some care those narratives of our Saviour's miracles which are contained in the four gospels.

In making this examination, we shall refer very often to the *naturalistic* and *mythical* explanations of the record, and will therefore briefly characterize these two methods of interpretation.

The naturalistic method, assuming the im-

¹ See a beautiful passage in Channing's *Dudleian Lecture, Works*, Vol. III. p. 119. We would also refer to Mansel on Miracles, in *Aids to Faith*; Heurtley on Miracles, in *Replies to Essays and Reviews*; Philippi, *Kirchliche Glaubenslehre*, Vol. I., p. 24, sq.; Schmid (C. T.), *Biblische Theologie des N. T.*, § 17, p. 85, sq., as presenting the argument for miracles in a clear light. These are mentioned as a part of the recent literature of the subject.

possibility of miracles, undertakes to show *that the writers of the four gospels nowhere ascribe any to Christ*. Whatever may have been their opinion of the events which they describe, they do not in reality *bear witness* to any phenomena which may not be referred to natural causes. This method was applied to the evangelical narratives by Paulus, who professed to reverence the character and teaching of Jesus, and to vindicate the historical accuracy of the gospels. He spoke of our Saviour's miracles as events "the natural causes of which were at that time unexplained," and so could not be handed down to us. "But these events," he adds, "become less doubtful the more they are shown to be, in this way or that, possible," — that is, natural. He therefore attempted, by the aid of various conjectures, to remove from the gospels all proper testimony for miracles. The miraculous cures were effected by natural remedies, of which the narratives are silent; and the casting out of demons was but the power of a wise man over the insane. But those who have shared the disbelief of Paulus have not found his interpreta-

tion of the gospels satisfactory. Yet no abler attempt has been made in the same direction, and therefore frequent reference will be made to his views.

The mythical hypothesis, which has been most skilfully applied by Strauss, admits that the evangelists do ascribe miracles to Christ, but, denying the possibility of their occurrence, maintains that the *marvellous stories recorded in the gospels were originated by the early Christians*. These attributed to Jesus Christ such works as in their opinion befitted his Messianic character and office; and the particular miracles which they ascribe to him were suggested, for the most part, by the extraordinary events or Messianic predictions of the Old Testament. "Our blessed Lord's miracles would be allegories, if they were, as Woolston claimed, parables intentionally invented for purposes of moral instruction, or facts which had a mystical as well as literal meaning: they would be legends, if, while containing a basis of fact, they were exaggerated by tradition: they would be myths, if, without really occurring, they were the result of a general preconception that the

Messiah ought to do mighty works, which thus gradually became translated into facts." "Strauss's peculiarity consisted in trying to show that if a small basis of fact, heightened by legend, be allowed in the gospel history, the influence of myth is a psychological cause sufficient to explain the remainder. The idea is regarded as prior to the fact: the need of a deliverer, he pretends, created the idea of a Saviour: the misinterpretation of old prophecy presented conditions, which, in the popular mind, must be fulfilled by the Messiah."¹ It will be necessary for us to cite the opinions of Strauss somewhat frequently in the course of our examination.

In order to exhibit the strength of the testimony for our Saviour's miracles in as simple and compact a form as possible, we shall generally number the *distinct points in which two or more of the records agree, where they might have differed*. The reader will gladly pardon the frequent appearance of these numerals, when he recollects the important service which they render to the argument.

¹ Farrar (A. S.), *History of Free Thought*, p. 269.

For the purpose of this investigation, the miracles of Christ may be divided into three classes, namely, *those wrought upon the natural world, those upon man, and those upon his own body.*



PART FIRST.

MIRACLES ON NATURE.

THESE may be subdivided into miracles evincing, on the one hand, *absolute control*, and, on the other, *creative power*, in the realm of nature: the term *nature* being used in this connection to signify the irrational world, animate or lifeless.

CHAPTER I.

MIRACLES OF ABSOLUTE CONTROL.

THESE have been called with less propriety "Miracles of Providence;" for all miracles, not to say all events, are providential, and those to be considered in the present chapter differ as much in principle from the *customary* workings of Providence as do any recorded in the gospels. They illustrate the absolute control of Jesus over nature and her forces.

§ I. *The first miraculous draught of fishes.*— Luke v. 1–11. (Cf. Matt. iv. 18–22; Mark i. 16–20.)

(a) The particulars mentioned by Luke are these. As Jesus was standing by the lake Gennesaret, and a great crowd pressed near him to hear the Word of God, he saw two boats by the lake, the fishers having left them to wash their nets. Entering one of these boats, which belonged to Simon, and asking him to push off a little from the land, he taught the crowds on shore from the boat in which he was seated. Having finished his discourse, he said to Simon: “Push thou out into the deep, and let ye down your nets for a draught.” Simon replied: “Master, toiling through the whole night we caught nothing, yet at thy word I will let down the net.” This done they enclosed a great multitude of fishes, so that their net was breaking, and they beckoned to their partners in the other ship to come and help them. They came, and the two boats were so filled as to be sinking. Then Simon fell at the feet of Jesus, and said: “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;” for sudden awe seized him and

those with him, as well as James and John, his partners in the other boat. But Jesus replied: "Fear not; henceforth thou shalt catch men." And bringing their boat to the land, the men left all and followed him..

The fishers' work, as it appears in this miracle, is a type of the ministry to which Peter and his associates were called. However slight the prospect of success in any circumstances, they were to cast in the gospel net where the Lord directed, the result of their effort depending on his invisible co-operation. The lesson of the miracle was therefore both humbling and encouraging. If human toil and skill are insufficient to bring a soul out of the depths of sin, the blessed Saviour does yet permit faithful men to have part with him in this sacred work. Without him, they can do nothing; aided by his unseen presence and power, they can do all things. In a very early hymn, ascribed to Clement of Alexandria, Jesus himself is thus addressed: —

"Fisher of men, the heirs of salvation,
Catching with sweet life, from the hostile deep,
The sacred fishes in a sea of evil,"

and the miracle under examination justifies in a very important sense this language.

(b) According to Paulus, there is no reason whatever for supposing a miracle in the present case. Jesus promised no success to Peter; he merely advised him to try again; Peter did so, and fortunately made a great haul.¹

If Christ, as we admit, did not in so many words promise success, his language was understood to foreshadow this (v. 5); and from the result Simon appears to have inferred, without rebuke, the divine knowledge or power of Christ (v. 8). Hence it is impossible to vindicate the moral purity of Jesus, and yet deny a miracle of knowledge or of control in this instance. To us the latter seems far more probable than the former; and we therefore adopt the language of Trench: "It was not merely that Christ, by his omniscience, knew that now there were fishes in that spot; we may not thus extenuate the miracle; but rather we are to contemplate him as the Lord of nature, who by the secret yet mighty magic of his will, was able to wield and guide even the unconscious creatures to his aims."

But we cannot approve the subsequent remarks of this writer, identifying the power which drew the fish to that spot with that

¹ *Commentar über das N. T.*, I. p. 442, sq.

which at all times guides their periodic migrations. The event before us was extraordinary, and it revealed in Christ a sovereign control over the brute creation.

(c) Strauss objects to the historical truth of Luke's narrative on the following grounds.

(1.) "Any spiritual action of Jesus on troops of fishes in the depth of the sea, bringing them to the place where Peter cast in his net, is inconceivable; for there is no point of connection between a rational spirit and irrational creatures."¹ Indeed! Are we then

to believe that God as a spirit can do nothing beyond the limits of our psychological knowledge? Or are we to admit beforehand that no testimony can be true which implies the deity of Christ?

(2.) "Jesus could not have known the presence of such a troop of fishes at the place where Peter cast in the net; a miracle of knowledge is incredible; for if he was omniscient he was not a true man,"¹ etc. This again will have no weight

with those who believe in the real though incomprehensible union of Deity and humanity in Christ. (3.) "No good reason for a miracle in the present case appears. The disciples did not need one to strengthen their

¹ *Leben Jesu*, Vol. I. p. 598, sq.

faith; indeed such a work is not adapted to produce genuine faith.”¹ If we have stated the lesson of the miracle correctly, it taught a great truth, and was fitted to be permanently useful to the disciples. Besides, it may have been just the manifestation of love and power needed by them at that time, and preparing them to hear the call of Jesus. (4.) “Luke’s account is inconsistent with that of John referring to the same event.”¹ When the next miracle is examined, the weakness of this reason will appear.

(d) The call of four apostles, as related by Matt. iv. 18–22, and Mark i. 16–20, is thought by most expositors to have been connected with this miraculous draught of fishes. This is the opinion of Calvin, Meyer, DeWette, Hase, Bleek, Ebrard, Trench, Ellicott, Blunt, Kitto, Robinson, and others. We perceive no insuperable objection to it. According to the several accounts, the place may have been the same, the persons called the same, the form of the call the same, the things forsaken the same, and the promptness of obeying the same. Moreover, if these accounts are referred to synchronous transactions, we escape the

¹ *Leben Jesu*, Vol. I. p. 598, sq.

improbability of a repetition of very similar events in the history of the apostles.

On this hypothesis, Mr. Blunt has pointed out a possible coincidence between the breaking of nets spoken of by Luke and the mending of nets spoken of by Matthew and Mark; and if the coincidence is admitted to exist, it must be pronounced unintentional, and therefore a mark of truthfulness. "The circumstance to be remarked," he says, "is this: that of the miracle, St. Matthew says not a single word; nevertheless he tells us that Zebedee and his sons were found by our Lord, when he gave them the call, '*mending their nets.*' How it happened that the nets wanted mending he does not think it needful to state, nor should we have thought it needful to inquire, but it is impossible not to observe, that it perfectly harmonizes with the incident mentioned by St. Luke, that in the miraculous draught of fishes the *nets brake*. This coincidence, slight as it is, seems to me to bear upon the truth of the miracle itself. For the '*mending of the nets,*' asserted by one evangelist, gives probability to the '*breaking of the nets,*' mentioned by the other,—the breaking of

the nets gives probability to the large draught of fishes,—the large draught of fishes gives probability to the miracle. I do not mean that the coincidence *proves* the miracle, but that it marks an attention to truth in the evangelists," etc.¹

But Augustine, Bengel, Paulus, Anger, Alford, and some other interpreters, do not believe that the call described by the first two evangelists was connected with the miracle before us. They find it difficult to reconcile the various accounts, and deem it more reasonable to assume a repetition of similar events. Perhaps they are correct, for the differences are certainly important. To reconcile the accounts, we must admit, not only that Matthew and Mark pass over in silence the eager multitude and the teaching by Jesus from the boat, while Luke fails to mention the formal call addressed separately to the two pairs of brothers, but also that the first two evangelists refer to the miraculous fishing by words not suggestive of a miracle, namely, "casting their nets into the sea," and that James and John, after taking into their boat a part of the great multitude

¹ *Undesigned Coincidences*, pp. 256, 257.

of fishes, had landed at a distinct point, and were mending their nets when Christ came by and called them.

For our present purpose it is only necessary to observe, that the evidence of an immediate connection between the call described by Matthew and Mark and the miracle described by Luke, is by no means conclusive, and that if such a connection be granted, no real disagreement between the several accounts can be shown to exist. The narrative of Luke is plain, coherent, natural, independent. It is no legendary outgrowth from the simpler accounts of the first two evangelists, but an original record, to be received or rejected with the rest of the gospel in which it stands.

§ II. *The second miraculous draught of fishes.*
John xxi. 1, sq.

This narrative is singularly beautiful and affecting, so that, apart from the miracle which it relates, it will ever be read with deep interest.

(a) The particulars mentioned are briefly these. After the resurrection of Christ, his disciples had repaired to Galilee, and, on a

certain occasion, at the motion of Peter, seven of them went "a fishing." During the night they caught nothing; but in the morning Jesus showed himself to them, standing on the beach; yet they did not at first recognize him. He therefore said to them, "Children, have ye any meat?" and they answered, "No." He then directed them to cast their net into the waters on the right of the boat, promising them success. They did so, and took so many fishes that they were unable to draw in the net. The beloved disciple now said to Peter, "It is the Lord;" and Peter, hearing this, girt on his outer garment, and cast himself into the sea. The other disciples followed him to the shore in the boat, dragging with them the net of fishes, as they were only about three hundred feet from the land. Having gone out of the boat upon the beach, they saw a fire of coals, with fish upon it, and bread. Jesus then said, "Bring of the fish which ye now took;" and Peter, ever prompt, went and drew ashore the net, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty-three, yet unbroken. Jesus further said to them, "Hither, dine;" and no one of the disciples durst ask him, Who art

thou? knowing him to be the Lord. Jesus gave them, with his own hands, the bread and the fish; and, after the disciples had eaten, began his memorable conversation with Peter, so full of tender reproof and confidence.

The general import of this miracle must be the same as the import of the foregoing. Both of them typify the work of the apostles and the source of their success. Toiling alone, though at the most favorable time; they toil in vain; but when at the command of Jesus, however unpropitious the hour, they cast in the net, many fishes are taken. And the repetition of this lesson illustrates the wisdom of Christ. When required to forsake all, that they might prepare for their great mission, and again when about to assume the full responsibility and toil of that mission, they needed to have its character brought distinctly before their minds. Some interpreters have insisted that the fish taken in the former miracle symbolize the members of the visible Church, many of whom will be finally lost, while those taken in the present case symbolize the elect, a definite number, no one of which will be lost by the breaking of the net.

(b) The events described in this narrative are different in all essential points from those related by Luke, and examined above. (1.) Those took place in the early part of Christ's ministry; these, after his resurrection. (2.) Luke speaks of two boats; John, of but one. (3.) Luke says that James and John were not in the same boat with Peter; John virtually says they were. (4.) Luke says their net broke;* John says it did not break. (5.) Luke declares that two boats were filled with the fishes taken; John asserts that the fish were not taken into the boat at all. (6.) Luke represents Peter as falling at the feet of Jesus and beseeching him to depart; John represents him as plunging into the sea to come to Christ as quickly as possible. (7.) Luke relates that Jesus called Peter to become a fisher of men; John, that he directed him to feed his sheep or lambs. (8.) Luke declares that Christ was in the boat; John asserts that he was on the shore. Other minor differences may be passed over in silence, for these establish beyond a doubt the distinctness of the two miracles.

Yet Strauss affirms it to be "*scarcely conceivable* that the history of John relates to an

event different from that described by Luke: the same narrative has without any doubt been erroneously assigned to different parts of the life of Christ.”¹ His argument against the historical truth of the two accounts rests, first, on the alleged impossibility of miracles, and, secondly, on the assumed identity of the two events which these accounts profess to describe. Both these supports have been considered, one in our Introduction and the other in the preceding paragraph, and have been proved false.

(c) Paulus finds everything natural in this account. He speaks of the fishers as surprised by their “good luck.” He supposes that Jesus had brought with him some bread, and that Peter, on reaching the shore, was directed to prepare a breakfast. Hence, when the other disciples landed, they found food already cooking on a fire of coals.

But surely it is strange that Peter, after swimming ashore, had time to build a fire upon the beach, and arrange the food upon it, before the boat arrived. Nothing could be more certain to a fair mind than that this narrative was intended by its author to de-

¹ I. 604.

scribe one miracle at least, and perhaps two. The remarks of Strauss against the naturalistic interpretation are pertinent and convincing.

(*d*) The bearing of Jesus, according to this narrative, was in perfect harmony with his bearing on other occasions between his resurrection and ascension. An air of mystery clothed his person and movements. No man knew whence he came, or whither he went, or how. He seemed to hover over the pathway of his disciples, visible or invisible at will. His body was real, yet not subject to the common laws of matter. With "new properties, powers, and attributes," it was a perfect servant of the spirit. Nowhere do the evangelists hint at any reason for this change in the bearing of Christ after his resurrection, but with nice agreement do all their accounts reveal the change itself. And this delicate harmony points with steady finger to the historical truth of their narratives. To suppose the incidents which suggest this mysterious change invented, and then related by four different writers, without any trace of design or collusion, surpasses the utmost limits of our credulity.

It may also be added that the bearing of Peter and John respectively, is in perfect keeping with their conduct on other occasions, and with the well-ascertained traits of their characters. "When they recognized the Lord," remarks Chrysostom, "again do the disciples display the peculiarities of their individual characters. The one, for instance, was more ardent, but the other more elevated; the one more eager, but the other endowed with finer perception. On which account John was the first to recognize the Lord, but Peter to come to him."¹

§ III. *The miracle of the stater in the fish's mouth.* Matt xvii. 24-27.

(a) The circumstances recorded are these: Jesus and his disciples had entered into Capernaum, when those taking the sacred tribute came to Peter, and said, "Doth your Master pay the tribute?" And Peter answered, "Yes." But when he came into the house where Jesus was, the latter anticipated him, saying, "What thinkest thou, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or tribute? from their sons, or from

¹ *In Joānn.* Hom. LXXXVII.

strangers?" Peter replied, "From strangers." And Jesus said, "Then are the sons free. But that we may not offend them, go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and having opened its mouth, thou wilt find a stater. That take and give to them for me and thee."

Without doubt Peter obeyed the direction of Christ, and found the promised money. As Jesus, by divine intuition, was cognizant of the dialogue between Peter and the tribute-takers, so was he in like manner cognizant of the coin in the mouth of a certain fish, and by his sovereign control in the realm of nature, he brought that particular fish first of all to the hook of his disciple. This seems to be the only proper account of the transaction.

"The two points in the miracle of the stater in the fish's mouth," observes Mr. Westcott, "which seem to mark its meaning, are: (1.) The gracious obedience to a ritual requirement to avoid offence, and (2.) the sovereign power which vindicates the independence which is not asserted by act."¹ By paying the sacred tribute, Jesus may have

¹ *Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles*, p. 23, note 3.

seemed to relinquish the position and privileges of sonship to God (v. 26), and therefore, to preclude such an inference from his act, and to show that he merely waived in one respect the exercise of his prerogatives, it was suitable for him to assert his rank by a miracle of sovereign control. This view may be supported by an appeal to analagous events in the life of Christ. Hence it is no valid objection to this miracle, that Jesus or Peter could certainly have obtained so small a sum by natural means, and especially in Capernaum. This mighty act was performed, we may be sure, not for the sake of the money, but for a higher and spiritual end. Only Christ himself could determine, in view of all the circumstances, when a miracle was necessary for the revelation of his character and the fulfilment of his mission. We have therefore very little respect for that "omniscient criticism" which, in the person of a Paulus or a Strauss, declares that there was in the present instance no occasion whatever for a miracle.

(b) Paulus holds that Peter was directed by Jesus to catch some fish, and sell them in the market for a stater, the sum re-

quired.¹ Accordingly, εὕρησϵις, *thou shalt find*, must denote a *mediate finding* of the money.

This interpretation requires ἰχθὺν, *fish*, to be a collective noun, which is inconsistent with the adjective πρῶτον, *first*, and with the apparently intentional use of a hook instead of a net. It also fails to explain the words, “having opened its mouth,” which imply that the money was in “the mouth,” and not in “the market”; for it is surely trifling to say that “having opened its mouth” may refer to a removal of the hook, or, by a slight change in the text, which a friend suggested to Paulus, to Peter’s opening his own mouth to cry up his fish in the market. When Meyer remarks, that “the whole interpretation of Paulus is an exegetical *portentum*!” his words are sober and just.

(c) Strauss unites with Paulus in pronouncing this miracle “strange, needless, and therefore incredible; hence nothing remains but to assume a legendary element” in the narrative. Moreover, the current theme of Peter’s fish-taking, and the well-known reports of jewels in the bodies of fishes, may sufficiently

¹ II. p. 658, sq.

account, he thinks, for the origin of the story preserved by Matthew.¹

In reply, we ask, How does this man know that such a miracle would have been useless? That it would not have vindicated in good time a great truth,—the Saviour's sonship to God? Is he acquainted with *all* the circumstances of the case? Does he know that such a work may not have been at that very time needful to strengthen the disciples and keep them from error? And how were the stories of Peter's fish-taking and of gems found in fishes to make the early Christians believe that the Messiah had wrought such a miracle as the one before us? The mythical interpretation seems to us, not only without foundation, but without plausibility.

§ IV. *The stilling of the tempest.* Matt. viii. 23-27, Mark iv. 36-41, and Luke viii. 22-25.

(a) These narratives differ without contradiction. E. g., Matthew says, that "as he entered into the ship his disciples followed him"; Luke, that "he entered into a ship and his disciples"; and Mark, that "having sent away the multitude, they (the disciples)

¹ II. p. 211.

take him as he was in the ship." Jesus enters the ship, his disciples dismiss the crowd, and, following him on board, without delay launch out into the deep. Exhausted by severe labor, he had, it seems, already sought a place of rest in the boat, and so the disciples, observing his weariness, were careful not to disturb him, but put out into the sea, "taking him as he was."

Again, Matthew says, "There arose a great tempest in the sea, so that the ship was covered by the waves"; Luke, "There came down a storm of wind on the lake, and they were becoming filled and in danger"; and Mark, "There arose a great storm of wind, and the waves were beating into the ship, so that it was already becoming full." Here is variety of expression with unity of idea.

Again, Matthew makes the terrified disciples say to Jesus, "Lord, save us: we perish"; Luke, "Master, Master, we perish"; and Mark, "Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?" Here the word rendered "we perish," is the same in all the accounts; but the title applied to Christ is different in every one of them. Yet the three words have so much in common that they may well be supposed to

represent the single Aramaic term, Rabbi. Probably the title was actually repeated by some of them, as in Luke. As to the clause in Mark, "Carest thou not?" it was doubtless expressed by one or more of the disciples, though most of them used other language, not implying reproach.

Again, Matthew says that Jesus reproved his disciples for their want of proper faith *before* the miracle; Mark and Luke say that he did so *after* it; and we see no reason to call in question the correctness of either statement. Why should not the Saviour twice remind them of their little faith? Other points might be noticed, but with the same result; the accounts differ without contradiction.

(*b*) They agree without dependence. For they all affirm: (1.) That Jesus proposed to pass over the lake with his disciples; (2.) that he entered into a ship with them; (3.) that he fell asleep in the ship during the passage; (4.) that a sudden and fierce storm arose; (5.) that the waves swept over the ship, and (6.) were in danger of filling and sinking it; (7.) that the disciples then awoke Jesus, and (8.) prayed him to save them from

speedy death; (9.) that he rose up, and (10.) rebuked the wind, (11.) which straightway ceased and there was a calm; (12.) that he reproved his disciples for their want of faith and (13.) consequent fear; (14.) that they were struck with awe, and (15.) expressed their wonder at his control over the winds (16.) and the sea. Thus, in sixteen particulars, these three narratives coincide where they might have differed;¹ yet the peculiarities of detail and expression are so marked as to prove their independence of one another.

Referring to this miracle, Tertullian says: "That little vessel presented an emblem of the Church, which is tossed about in the sea, that is the world, and in waves, that is persecutions and temptations; the Lord in his patience sleeping, as it were, until awakened at last by the prayers of his saints, he shall calm the world and restore tranquillity to his people."² Christ is here presented as the

¹ Perhaps the language of Matthew, verse 27, "The men wondered," etc., has respect to the boat's crew. If so, the last three points are attested by two evangelists, while the other one mentions an additional circumstance in perfect agreement with their testimony.

² *De Baptismo*, ch. 12.

source of deliverance to his people. He is with them in the storm, and his power is ample to save. "We may believe," says Westcott, "that not we only, but Christ himself is endangered in the rising tempest, and seek to rouse him with our despairing cries; yet even so, he is still with us,—with us though sleeping,—and it were better that he should not chide us for our little faith."¹ It may also be suggested, that the unusual exhaustion of Christ reminded the disciples too forcibly of his human weakness, and dimmed for a moment their perception of his divinity, so that a miracle of power was especially in place to reassure their faith.

"To understand," says Dr. Thomson, "the causes of these sudden and violent tempests, we must remember that the lake lies low,—six hundred feet lower than the ocean; that the vast and naked plateaus of Jaulan rise to a great height, spreading backward to the wilds of Hauran, and upward to snowy Hermon; that the watercourses have cut out profound ravines and wild gorges, converging to the head of this lake, and that these act like gigantic funnels to draw down the winds

¹ *Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles*, p. 33.

from the mountains.”¹ “After sunset,” writes Mr. Bartlett, “I strolled down to the lake, and, seating myself upon a mass of broken wall, enjoyed the freshness of the evening. All the day there had not been a breath of air,—the sultry heat had been that of a furnace; but now a cool breeze came off the table-land, and, rushing down the ravines that descend to the lake, began to ruffle its placid bosom. As it grew darker, the breeze increased to a gale, the lake became a sheet of foam, and the white-headed breakers dashed proudly on the rugged beach; its gentle murmur was now changed into the wild and mournful sound of the whistling wind and the agitated waters. Afar off was dimly seen a little barque struggling with the waves, and then lost sight of amidst the misty rack. To have thus seen so striking an exemplification of the Scripture narrative, was as interesting as it was unexpected.”² It will be noticed that these writers speak of the wind as rushing *down* through ravines upon the lake, and that Luke, with equal precision,

¹ *The Land and the Book*, Vol. II. pp. 32, 33.

² Quoted from Dr. Hackett's *Illustrations of Scripture*, pp. 329, 330.

says, "there came *down* a storm of wind on the lake." The whole scene, as depicted by the evangelists, is true to nature.

(c) After sketching the previous events, Paulus says: "Jesus was just awake and had looked around, uttering some exclamations *on* the fury of the wind and the sea, when, before one was aware of it, all was again quiet. Storm and calm follow each other very quickly on lakes, especially those surrounded by mountains. Hence the rescued, between fear and wonder, ascribe the fortunate issue to the presence of Jesus. 'The storms and the waves also obey him!' winks and whispers one to another. That *Jesus* knew or approved this *interpretation*, the narrative does not affirm." ¹

But the evangelists do expressly affirm that Jesus *rebuked* the winds and the sea, one of them giving his words: "Peace; be still!" and they say nothing whatever of his uttering some exclamations on the fury of the storm. Besides, if he did not know of their *winking* and *whispering*, what becomes of his extraordinary power, admitted by Paulus, of reading the looks and divining the thoughts

¹ I. pp. 474, 475.

of men? A naturalistic interpretation of the text must unavoidably assail the moral integrity of Jesus.

(*d*) The mythic hypothesis is very lame in the present instance. The Old Testament myth, which is supposed by Strauss to have suggested the probability of such a miracle in the life of Christ, is the passage of the Red Sea;¹ but surely there is no great resemblance between the two events. Moreover, the Old Testament miracle seems not to have been matched in importance by the New,—a strange oversight on the part of Christians.

§ V. *Christ walking upon the sea.* Matt. xiv. 22–36; Mark vi. 45–56; and John vi. 15–21.

(*a*) These accounts differ without contradiction. Two points of disagreement have been supposed to exist, namely, as to the position of the ship in the sea when Jesus appeared, and as to his entering it or not. The first two evangelists, it has been said, represent Jesus as overtaking the ship near the middle of the lake, while the last evangelist intimates that he came up with it near the

¹ II. p. 191, sq.

western shore. But the words, "in the midst of the sea," cannot be pressed to signify the exact locality; they might have been used if the ship had been much nearer one shore than the other, provided it was somewhat remote from both. Moreover, the statement of John, that "the ship was immediately at the land," may signify no more than this: that it was there in a very short time, as compared with the long night of previous agony. Possibly; however, he may have intended to suggest another miracle.

Again, the first two evangelists affirm that Jesus entered the ship before the wind ceased, but John, it is said, virtually denies this; for he says, "they *wished* to take him into the ship, and the ship was immediately at the land," and therefore they did not do it. But the Greek may properly be rendered, "they were therefore willing to take him into the ship," when the sound of his well-known voice had dispelled their fears, and, having done so, "the ship was immediately at the land to which they were going."

(*b*) They agree without dependence. They all testify, (1.) that Jesus went into the mountain by himself, (2.) for the purpose of

praying; (3.) that in the mean time his disciples had entered into a ship, (4.) to pass over to the other side, and (5.) had pushed out into the open sea; (6.) that there was a strong wind blowing; (7.) that Jesus came to them in the night, (8.) walking upon the sea; (9.) that they saw him thus walking and (10.) were affrighted; (11.) that he addressed them, saying, (12.) "It is I, be not afraid"; (13.) that they received him into the ship, (14.) and the wind ceased. The last two particulars are not asserted, but implied by John. Matthew and Mark add that, when the disciples first saw Jesus walking on the sea, they supposed him to be a phantom or apparition, and cried out through fear, and also that the miracle excited the greatest wonder and awe in the breasts of those who witnessed it. The circumstance of Peter's going to Jesus "on the waters" is preserved in the first gospel only. Between the several narratives there are differences so marked, not only in phraseology, but also in details, as to establish beyond a doubt their independence of one another. A brief inspection of the text will convince every scholar of this important fact.

The purport of this miracle is thus described by Trench: "Nor can we, I think, fail to recognize the symbolic character which this whole transaction wears. As that bark was upon those stormy seas, such is oftentimes the Church. It seems as though it had not its Lord with it, such little way does it make; so baffled is it and tormented by the opposing storms of the world. But his eye is on it still; he is in the mountain apart, praying; ever living, an ascended Saviour, to make intercession for his people. And when at length the time of urgent need has arrived, he is suddenly with it, and that in marvellous ways past finding out,—and then all that before was laborious is easy, and the toiling rowers are anon at the haven where they would be."¹ It is the Saviour's method of dealing with his people thus to surprise them with deliverance in the time of sorest need. Hence the miracle in question may be considered a type of the spiritual no less than the providential succor which he brings to the household of faith. It illustrates the tender love and watchful care and divine power of the Redeemer, and accords with the

¹ *Miracles*, p. 225.

discipline of grace by which in all ages he prepares his own for service and for glory.

(c) According to Paulus, Jesus was seen by the disciples, in the morning twilight, walking along on a high shore which overlooked the sea.¹

But Alford remarks that in no other instance are the words ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης thus used after an *active* verb. Besides, if the disciples saw Jesus on a high shore, why did they not see the shore also? Or, if they did see it, why were they affrighted? Was a man walking along on shore an object so unusual as to terrify honest men? And if Jesus was on the land, why did Peter ask permission to come to him "on the waters"? What could have put such a thought in his mind? And how did Christ save him when sinking? Was he a stronger swimmer than Peter? And why were the disciples so greatly amazed at what they had seen? And for what reason did Jesus enter the ship at all? It is not too much to say that the naturalistic view is baseless, and directly opposed to the letter and spirit of the gospels.

(d) Besides the two alleged contradictions

¹ II. p. 333, sq.

noticed above, Strauss brings forward the attempt of Peter to walk on the water, and the wish of Christ to pass by the ship, as plainly unhistorical. His comments on the history of Peter's endeavor to go to Jesus resolve themselves into a protest against miracles in general, and must not detain us; but the statement of Mark, that Jesus "would have passed by them," — ἤθελε παρελθεῖν αὐτούς, — is worthy of consideration. According to Strauss, "Mark would show by these words that Jesus, supported by divine power, had intended to walk quite across the entire sea as on solid land. Not satisfied with the report that Christ went thus over the water in order to aid his disciples, he represents such an act as so natural and common to him, that, without respect to the disciples, he took his way over water, whenever it lay in his course, even as over terra firma."¹

But the words of Mark do not imply this; indeed, he seems to have precluded the possibility of such an inference from his language by saying that Jesus, while yet on the land, "saw them toiling in rowing." The only reason for mentioning this fact must have

¹ II. p. 198.

been to explain his going to them on the sea. It cannot therefore be said that Mark intended to suggest that Jesus took his way over the sea, according to his custom, and without any special motive for this act in the condition of his disciples. Besides, it requires some imagination to find such a view in the clause, "and would have passed by them." This may doubtless be explained, with Alexander, as nearly equivalent to the expression, "he was about to pass by them," the verb ἵθελε being used in the sense of an English auxiliary; or it may have been affirmed of Christ *more humano*, a desire being attributed to him which would have led a man to act as he acted. To all appearance he was going by the ship, when the cry of his disciples led him to speak. It was his purpose to give them an opportunity of requesting his aid, instead of bestowing it unsought. So, likewise, on another occasion, we are told that "he made as though he would go further," although he was prevailed upon by the urgent request of two disciples to abide with them for a time.

One cannot fail to remark that the bearing of Peter on this occasion was in perfect har-

mony with his character, as revealed by the whole evangelical record. Confident, impetuous, demonstrative, and perhaps extravagant, he was at the same time artless, confiding, energetic, and sound at the core. How could the four evangelists have united in their delineation of his character, without drawing from life?

Others have objected to the miracle before us on the ground of its being unnecessary. It seems to have been performed, they say, merely for the sake of *showing* what the Lord could do. But this surely is a mistake. The disciples were not only rowing against the wind, but also tortured by fear, and exposed to peril; and Jesus came in the *most direct* way to their relief. Besides, the presence of natural evil was not alone sufficient to call forth the miraculous agency of Christ. There must also be the prospect of removing moral or spiritual evil, and this appears to have been in all cases the predominant motive. It might, therefore, sometimes happen that the spiritual and natural conditions for miraculous action existed in very different degrees. Much depended on the hearts of those with reference to whose good the work was to be

performed; and the moral reasons for a miracle might be very strong when the natural were comparatively weak.

Whether the miracle of walking on the sea consisted in a suspension of the law of gravity for the body of Jesus, or in counterworking the force of gravity by Divine power, or in making the water solid under his feet, we cannot say; it is perhaps sufficient to affirm that it was wrought by virtue of his sovereign control of the realm of nature. The remarks of Trench on this point are wholly unsatisfactory: "It was the will of Christ which bore him triumphantly over those waters; even as it was to have been *the will of Peter*, that will indeed made in the highest degree energetic by faith on the Son of God, which should, *in the same manner*, have enabled him to walk on the great deep, and, though with partial and transient failure, did so enable him."¹ We had always supposed that it was the power of Christ, and not the will of Peter, which enabled this disciple, so long as he had faith, to walk on the waters. Yet Alford seems to echo the opinion of Trench, when he says of Peter's act: "It contains one

¹ *Miracles*, p. 231.

of the most pointed and striking revelations which we have of *the nature and analogy of faith*; and a notable example of the power of the spiritual state of man over the inferior laws of matter, so often brought forward by our Lord (see Matt. xvii. 20, 21)."¹ If this is so, if the force of gravity can be neutralized, and mountains be cast into the sea, by the energy of a believer's will, it may also be true, that "a remnant of his (original) power survives to man in the well-attested fact (!) that his body is lighter when awake than sleeping." Mark the proof of this unqualified statement: "It was noticed long ago by Pliny," and "every nurse that has carried a child can bear witness to the fact."² One is reminded by this evidence of the man who, when asked his weight, replied: "Commonly, it is about one hundred and fifty pounds, but when *mad* I weigh a *ton*!"³ But, seriously, it would have been wiser for the learned dean to have tested the matter by more

¹ Greek Testament. Note on Matthew xiv. 28. It is the second clause of the passage quoted above to which we specially object.

² *Miracles*, p. 232.

³ After Whipple. Quoted from memory.

accurate scales. The cause of truth may be deeply injured by such unguarded statements.

§ VI. *Judgment of the fruitless fig-tree.* Matt. xxi. 18-22; Mark xi. 12-14; 20-26.

On the narratives of this miracle we remark, —

(a) That they involve no contradiction. It has indeed been said that Matthew asserts an instant drying up of the doomed tree, seen by the disciples at the moment and on the spot, while Mark allows a whole day for the process, stating explicitly that the disciples first saw it “dried up from the roots” on the morrow.

But the word rendered “presently,” in Matthew, need not be pressed to signify the very moment after the sentence of Christ. The sap may have instantly ceased to flow, yet the leaves may not have been perfectly dried up for hours. It will also be observed that the language of Matthew as to the time when the disciples first noticed the tree as withered, is indefinite, and therefore quite consistent with that of Mark. The other differences are of too little importance to require attention at this point.

(b) That they bear witness in common to the principal details. For they both testify, (1.) that the place of the miracle was between Bethany and Jerusalem; (2.) that the time of it was the day after Christ's triumphal entrance into the holy city; (3.) that he was on his way again into Jerusalem; (4.) that he suffered hunger; (5.) that he saw a fig-tree, having leaves, a sign of fruit; (6.) that he went to the tree to look for fruit, (7.) but found none, the leaves were all; (8.) that he then sentenced it to perpetual sterility; (9.) that his disciples (one day later, according to Mark) saw the tree dried up, and (10.) expressed their wonder at the sudden change; (11.) that Jesus thereupon exhorted them to unwavering faith, saying (12.) that with such faith the mountain on which they were standing should, at their word, be removed and (13.) cast into the sea; (14.) and, indeed, that they should receive whatever they should ask of God. These facts are in perfect keeping with one another, are the most important facts of the case, and are plainly attested by both narratives.

"The fig-tree," says Neander, "rich in foliage, but destitute of fruit, represents the

Jewish people, so abundant in outward shows of piety, but destitute of its reality. Their vital sap was squandered upon leaves. And as the fruitless tree, failing to realize the aim of its being, was destroyed, so the Theocratic nation, for the same reason, was to be overtaken, after long forbearance, by the judgments of God, and shut out from his kingdom." "It is true no explanation on the part of Christ is added in the account of this event, . . . but we find such an explanation in the parable of the *barren fig-tree*,¹ which evidently corresponds with the fact that we just unfolded. As the *fact* is wanting in Luke, and the *parable* in Matthew and Mark, we have additional reason to infer such a correspondence."² "In this act of thine," meditates Bishop Hall, "I see both an emblem and a prophecy . . . Once before hadst thou compared the Jewish nation to a fig-tree in the midst of thy vineyard, which, after three years expectation and culture, yielding no fruit, was by thee, the owner, doomed to a speedy excision; now thou attest what then

¹ Luke xiii. 6-9.

² *Life of Christ*, English translation. Harper & Brothers. pp. 358, 359.

thou saidst. No tree abounds more with leaf and shade, no nation abounded more with ceremonial observations and semblances of piety. Outward profession, when there is want of inward truth and real practice, doth but help to draw on and aggravate judgments. Had this fig-tree been utterly barren and leafless, it had perhaps escaped the curse."¹ It will be borne in mind that, in the fig-tree, fruit precedes foliage, so that the presence of the latter betokens that of the former.

(c) Jesus, if we are to follow the lead of naturalists, discovered signs of death in the fig-tree, and therefore predicted its future barrenness; but the scorching sun of an unusually hot day caused it to wither away sooner, perhaps, than he had anticipated.

This view is incompatible with the proper force of Christ's words to the fig-tree; for the verb is not in the future indicative but in the subjunctive; and also with the obvious implications of the dialogue between Jesus and his disciples on the following morning. For the latter, by the mouth of Peter, seemed

¹ *Contemplations on the Historical Passages of the Old and New Testaments*, p. 665.

to attribute the drying up of the tree from its roots to the curse of Christ, while the former virtually indorsed their view. Strauss has clearly shown that we must admit a real miracle, or else deny the historical truth of the gospels. Of course he accepts the latter alternative.

(d) To destroy the credibility of these narratives, Strauss appeals to the unchristian character of the reported miracle. A *penal* miracle, he maintains, would have been incompatible with the avowed spirit and aim of Jesus (see Luke ix. 55, sq.); much more, then, the penal destruction of a *guiltless* though barren tree; and still more, of such a tree, because it did not bear fruit *out of season*.¹

To this we reply, that the destruction of a tree *cannot be penal*, except in a figurative or symbolical sense. An unconscious vegetable can neither sin nor be punished. The miracle before us was but a parable enacted to foreshadow the doom of moral beings and to indicate the ground of it. . Whoever objects to such symbolical action, must do it because the doctrine taught is false, or the method

¹ "It was not the season of figs," says Mark. For the argument of Strauss, see his *Leben Jesu*, Vol. II. p. 255, sq.

of teaching it, wrong. But the doctrine taught cannot in this instance be proved false, either with reference to the Jews in particular, or with reference to mankind in general. Nor can the method of teaching be shown to be wrong; for a civil ruler would have had a right to destroy the tree for public and important ends; much more had Jesus a perfect and sovereign right to destroy it for important moral ends. It is quite out of our power to believe that Christ exhibited any signs of indignation at the *tree*, as such, or that his disciples supposed him to be dealing with the tree for its *own* sake, and not for theirs. To say nothing of our Saviour's divinity, he was no thoughtless, irritable child, as they very well knew, but a man of matchless wisdom and self-control. His sentence on the fruitless tree was doubtless uttered with deep moral seriousness, and his disciples must have felt that he was teaching them a great lesson,—was preparing for them in the realm of nature a fit symbol and shadow of some high reality in the realm of moral being.

(e) The question, whether Jesus really hoped to find fruit on the fig-tree or not, here presents itself. If he did, how can his ignorance

be explained? If he did not, how can his conduct be justified? The statements that Jesus was hungry, that he saw from a distance a fig-tree covered with leaves, that he came to see if, as the leaves indicated, it had fruit, have been said to prove that he hoped to find figs, but was disappointed. Admitting for a moment the conclusiveness of this proof, what light do the disappointment and ignorance of Jesus cast upon his person? They merely illustrate the fact, it has been said, that *as a man* Jesus might be deceived, for his knowledge was limited, though as a divine being he could never be mistaken, because his knowledge was infinite. "It was no more disparagement to thee," says Bishop Hall, "to grow in knowledge than in stature; neither was it any more disgrace to thy perfect humanity that thou, as a man, knewest not all things at once, than that thou wast not in thy childhood at thy full growth."¹

This view of the case may be correct, but it is superficial. Other and deeper questions arise. Was there no fellowship between the divine and the human intelligence of Christ? If such fellowship existed to any extent, by

¹ *Contemplations*, p. 565.

what law was the measure of it determined? By the condition of the lower nature, or by the will of the higher, or by the use to be made of what was communicated? Did the human soul of Jesus share whatever knowledge appertained, for the time being, to his Messianic work? or was some part of that knowledge possessed by the Divine Nature alone? Did the higher nature of Jesus serve the lower in all the common affairs of life, or only in those which belonged to his official work? These and similar queries spring out of the opinion that Christ hoped to find fruit on the fig-tree; but, as we reject this opinion, it is enough for us to suggest, without discussing them.

If we recall the narratives of miracles already examined, e. g., of the two miraculous draughts of fishes, of the stater in the fish's mouth, of the walking on the sea (cf. Mark vi. 48), not to speak of others not yet considered, it will be evident that Jesus had a superhuman and perfect knowledge of nature as well as of man, of facts in the inanimate world as well as of thoughts in the rational. And if we add to this the circumstance that the judgment of the fig-tree was symbolical, it

will be clear that Christ's going to the tree and inspection of it were also symbolical. Nay, more; his hunger, as representative of his longing for spiritual fruit from his people, was necessary to the completeness of the parabolic action, and was, we cannot doubt, in connection with the ostentatious display of leaves on the barren tree, the occasion of Christ's solemn and prophetic act. Calvin remarks on this point, that, "since hunger was irksome to his flesh, he undertook to conquer it by an opposite affection, namely, by promoting the glory of his Father; as he says elsewhere, *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me.*¹ For he was also at that time oppressed by weariness and thirst. And I the more incline to this conjecture, because his hunger was the occasion for performing the miracle and teaching his disciples. When therefore he was hungry, and there was no food at hand, he nourished himself from another source, — by advancing the glory of God. By the tree as a symbol, he aimed to set forth the destruction which will overtake hypocrites, and at the same time their ostentation and utter worthlessness."

¹ John iv. 34.

In this instance, also, a sense and probably an acknowledgment of his human weakness were followed, in the wisdom of Jesus, by a signal manifestation of his divine power. And just then, amidst the perils which encompassed their Master, the disciples were more impressed by the miracle as evincing the power of Christ than as foreshadowing the doom of hypocrites. They overlooked, perhaps, the deeper meaning for the more obvious. And Christ himself, seeing the turn which their thoughts had taken, spoke to them accordingly.¹

¹ See Matt. xxi. 20-22; Mark xi. 20-26, and the remarks of Neander in his *Life of Christ*, pp. 358, 359.

CHAPTER II.

MIRACLES OF CREATIVE POWER.

THESE have been esteemed by many writers the most signal exhibitions of Divine Power in the ministry of Christ; and if it is proper to speak of gradations of the miraculous, we should assign them a higher place than belongs to those in the former chapter.

§ I. *The changing of water into wine.* John ii. 1-12.

On this narrative we submit the following remarks:—

(a) The objections made to it by skeptics are of no weight. They are founded on Mary's language to Jesus, on his reply to her words, on the epideictic character of the miracle, and on its immoral tendency.

Why should Mary remind her son that the wine was about to fail? Because she knew his wisdom, and, perhaps, because "there had been," as Alford suggests, "a previous hint

given her, by our Lord, of his intention and the manner of performing it."

Why then should he call her "woman," and disclaim any special connection with her? Because he was now to appear as the Messiah, her Lord and Saviour, and to do his great work in sole subordination to his heavenly Father. His reply was a serious but not severe announcement of the change which had taken place in his relation to Mary, and was called out by her modest, though unwise hint, that it was now time for him to interpose. His time, the proper moment for him to act, was not yet come, and no human wisdom could fix upon it.

But why should he work a miracle for mere display? Was it necessary for him to manifest his glory by furnishing a *luxury*? Were there none sick, or blind, or lame, in the region to be healed? This objection is superficial. It does not comprehend the sympathy of Jesus with mankind, and his purpose to purify and ennoble all the relations and enjoyments of life. Had he been a teacher of asceticism, a prophet of sorrow, with no fresh life in his being, this miracle might have seemed incongruous; but not so when

we understand the purport of his work. His message was good news. He came to quicken, to purify, to raise, and to spiritualize all things, and this miracle was an emblem and type of his work.

Finally, why should he provide by miracle for the intoxication of the guests? There is no ground for the assertion that he did so. The allusion to drunkenness as not perhaps uncommon in such feasts does not imply that it had been or was likely to be seen in the marriage at Cana, nor does the amount of wine created prove our Saviour to have been indifferent to the sin of intoxication. If he provided at all, it was surely fitting that he should do it liberally, as in nature.

(*b*) The particulars recorded are these. On the third day after a given date there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus was also invited to the marriage, and with him his disciples. The wine at length began to fail, and the mother of Jesus reminded him of the fact, by saying, "They have not wine." He answered her: "Woman, what have I and thou in common? My time is not yet." Mary then spoke to the servants, saying,

“Whatsoever he saith to you, do.” Standing there were six water-jars of stone, used for Jewish washings, and holding two or three measures apiece (say twenty-one gallons): Jesus said to the servants: “Fill ye the vessels with water;” and they filled them full. He then said to them, “Draw now, and bear to the master of the feast;” and they did so. The master of the feast knew nothing of the miracle, and when he had tasted the wine, he calls out to the bridegroom, saying, “Every man first gives good wine, and then the poorer, after they have become drunken; but thou hast kept the good wine till now.” This was the first miracle of Jesus; by it he manifested his glory, and in view of it his disciples believed on him.

It is scarcely possible to doubt that the writer of this account was present at the marriage-feast which he describes. The details of his record are so minute and singular as to reveal the hand of an eye-witness. John was already a disciple of Jesus, and was doubtless permitted to rejoice in this first miracle of his Lord and verify its greatness by the evidence of sense. How natural that he should be at the side of Jesus and listen

to the conversation between him and Mary; that he should note the command addressed by his Master to the servants, and the filling of the empty vessels with water; that he should mark their astonishment when told to draw from these vessels and bear to the master of the feast; that he should watch with deepest interest the master of the feast and treasure up his words; and that his faith and joy in Christ should be strengthened by this supernatural event.

Kitto thus characterizes the evidence afforded by John: "First, the vessels used were such as were standing by for ordinary purposes, precluding any idea of collusion; then they were not wine-vessels, but water-pots, so that it could not be suggested that there was some sediment of wine remaining in them, which gave a flavor to the water poured in; . . . then there is the intervention of the servants in filling vessels, but for which it might have appeared . . . that the wine had come from some unexpected quarter; lastly, there is the evidence of the symposiarch, or 'ruler of the feast,' who, knowing nothing of the history of this wine, pronounces upon it that it is not only real wine, but

good wine,—better than had yet been produced in the feast. Nothing can be more complete than this evidence. . . . ‘The keenest eye can discover no flaw in it.’”¹

We have already intimated the lesson of this miracle, but will add a few sentences from others. “The miracle of Cana,” observes Westcott, “as the first of Christ’s ‘signs,’ is in a peculiar sense the pregnant type of his ministry. That turning of water into wine tells us of a new energy present among men, silently working for their blessing. It tells us of one who gives when he receives, and entertains when he is welcomed as a guest. It tells us that at length, in the fulness of time, the springs of joy are ennobled, while the water of purification passes into the wine of gladness.”² And Neander remarks: “Christ employed water, one of the commonest supports of life, as the vehicle of a higher power; so it is the peculiarity of Christ’s spirit and labors, the peculiarity of the work of Christianity, *not* to destroy what is natural, but to ennoble and transfigure it; to enable it, as the organ of divine powers, to produce

¹ Kitto, *Life of Christ*, p. 203, sq.

² *Miracles*, p. 11.

effects beyond its original capacities. To energize the power of water into that of wine is, indeed, in every sense, the peculiar office of Christianity.”¹

(c) Paulus supposes that Jesus anticipated a deficiency of wine on this occasion, on account of the unexpected increase of the number of guests by the coming of his disciples, and therefore brought along a considerable quantity with him. His mother was aware of this store, and of his purpose to use it at the feast; hence she reminded him of the failure of wine as furnished by the bridegroom. Jesus wished to make his gift as agreeable as possible, and therefore produced it in a mysterious way. The bringing of water to fill the jars was necessary to this harmless deception. The servants were not let into the secret, but the wine was substituted for the water when they were busy elsewhere.²

This invention of Paulus sets at nought the plain language of the text, and deserves no serious reply. Whoever believes that by *such* “signs” and “manifestations of his glory” Jesus gained an almost marvellous influence

¹ *Life of Christ*, p. 168.

² IV. p. 150, sq.

over his disciples, and created in their minds the moral image of himself which is stamped upon the gospels, is quite beyond the reach of argument, and must be left to feed on his own empty imaginations.

(*d*) In the Old Testament narratives of water turned into blood, and of bitter fountains made sweet, Strauss finds materials and motives for the legend of John. A miracle, he conjectures, would naturally be ascribed to Jesus, which involved a change of water into some other element, so as to equal the wonder of Egypt, and at the same time a change into something nobler and better, so as to correspond with the beneficent reign of the Messiah. But how could this be done, unless it were by a myth reporting the change of water into wine? Hence, as all miracles are incredible, and especially such a one as is here related by John, his narrative is beyond question purely mythical.¹

We do not think it necessary to offer any reply to this view. His assertion that, if a miracle like the one here described had been wrought, the first three evangelists must have heard of it and could not have forgotten it,

¹ II. p. 259, sq.

and would therefore have related it, rests upon a completely erroneous view of the gospels,—upon a denial of the inspiration of the evangelists. Men who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost were not likely to choose their materials according to the notions of Dr. Strauss.

(*e*) This miracle lays no foundation for the papal doctrine of Transubstantiation. For, according to John, the new substance was recognized and identified by the senses of men, while, according to the Catholic doctrine, the new substance in the Eucharist cannot thus be known. Looking at the record of John we say, that which was received by the master of the feast and by the guests produced the same effects as wine, and therefore it must have had the properties of wine, and if so, it was in reality wine, for we know objects by their properties and not otherwise; but looking at the creed of Catholics in respect to the consecrated elements, we must say just the opposite, namely, that which has the properties, and produces the effects of bread or wine, is totally different from either of these. Against the assertion that the sacred wafer has become the

very body of Christ, we urge the testimony of exactly the same senses which informed the disciples that what they were drinking was no longer water but veritable wine. And if the faithful Catholic may not rely on the evidence of his senses in the alleged miracle of the Eucharist, how can he rely upon it to establish any other miracle or fact? How can he know, it has been asked, that the words "this is my body," are on the sacred page? For this he has but the evidence of one of his senses, while he has the evidence of two of them to prove that the wafer after consecration is still bread.¹

§ II. *Feeding of the five thousand.* Matt. xiv. 13-21; Mark vi. 30-44; Luke ix. 10-17, and John vi. 1-14.

This is the only miracle described by all the evangelists, and it deserves careful study. It may be observed, —

(a) That these accounts differ without contradiction. According to some interpreters, they do not agree as to the point of time in the ministry of Christ when this miracle

¹ Cf. Tillotson's *Works*, Vol. II. Ser. XXVI. pp. 407, 445, 447.

was wrought; but it is plain to us that they do not *disagree*. Mark and Luke place it directly after the return of the Twelve from a missionary excursion, and they alone give any precise statements on this point. The words of John, "after these things," (v. 1,) permit us to assume that a considerable interval separated the discourse of Christ in Jerusalem (John v. 16, sq.) from his arrival on the east side of Gennesaret. They fix the temporal *order*, but not *proximity* of these events; and hence the writers are not chargeable with contradicting one another. According to Matthew, the report of the death of John the Baptist seems to have moved Jesus to go over the lake to a desert place. This may also be easily reconciled with the other accounts; for our Saviour may have been moved by more than one consideration to seek a place of comparative seclusion. The remarks of Alford are very satisfactory on this point.¹ As to the succession of events in the life of Christ, we cannot rely upon the gospel of Matthew in all cases; for events are sometimes transposed for the sake of greater unity of impression and moral power in the narrative.

¹ See his note to Matthew xiv. 13, sq.

Again, a disagreement as to the *place* where the miracle was wrought has been alleged to exist between Luke and the other evangelists; but it is a mistake. The Bethsaida near which the multitudes were fed was on the northeast, not on the northwest, of Lake Genesaret. The first three gospels suppose Jesus to have been just before in Capernaum. From this place, Matthew says, "He went away in a ship to a desert place apart;" Mark, "They went away by ship into a desert place apart;" and Luke, "Taking them he went away apart into a desert place of the city called Bethsaida." John says that "Jesus went away beyond the sea of Galilee." It is argued from Luke's omission of the words "by ship," that he believed the journey to have been made by land, and hence that the Bethsaida referred to was on the west side of the lake. Such inferences are certainly unwarrantable. Luke says they "went," but does not tell us *how* they went; Matthew and Mark say they "went," and also tell us *how* they went. If there is any contradiction here our eyes are too dull to perceive it.

Again, it has been thought impossible to

reconcile John's account of the conversation between Jesus and his apostles with that of the other gospels. This seems to be a mistake also ; for we may represent the whole dialogue as follows. Late in the afternoon some of the disciples, who had been passing around amid the throngs of people, came to Jesus, saying, "The place is a desert, and it is now late ; send the people away, that they may go into the fields and villages round about and buy food for themselves ; for they have nothing to eat." Instead of answering this suggestion instantly, Jesus raised his eyes and thoughtfully surveyed the crowds of people still pressing near him. Then turning to Philip, who had been with him in silence, he said : "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" intimating his purpose to provide for them a meal. Philip responded : "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." Jesus now declared his purpose more distinctly, saying to the disciples, as a body, "They have no need to go away : give ye them to eat." How natural their answer : "Shall we depart and buy them two hundred pennyworth of bread and give

them to eat?" The Saviour replied, "How many loaves have ye? Go and see." At once Andrew said: "There is one lad here that has five barley loaves and two small fishes; but what are these for so many?" The disciples made inquiry for food, and procured of the lad his loaves and fishes; it was all they could find; and, returning, they said to Jesus, "We have but five loaves and two fishes." Is there anything impossible or even unnatural in all this? Far from it.

The other alleged contradictions are still easier of solution, serving to confirm rather than to weaken the united testimony of the four gospels as to the reality of the miracle before us.

(*b*) These accounts agree in all essential parts. For they unite in testifying, (1.) That Jesus repaired to a desert place on the north-eastern side of the sea of Tiberias; (2.) that many people followed him thither; (3.) that Jesus at length looked upon them as in need of food; (4.) that he spoke with his disciples about giving it to them; (5.) that his disciples had at command but five loaves (6.) and two fishes; (7.) that Jesus directed them to have the people sit down on the grass; (8.)

that he then himself took the loaves and fishes, (9.) invoked on them a blessing from God, (10.) and gave them to his disciples, (11.) who distributed them to the crowds; (12.) that all the people ate, (13.) until they were satisfied; (14.) that the disciples then gathered up the fragments, (15.) filling twelve shoulder-baskets with them; (16.) and that the men who ate were about five thousand in number. These are the principal facts, simple, coherent, credible; all of them evident to sense and capable of being proved to a moral certainty by human testimony. A variety of minor circumstances, bringing the events of the hour more distinctly before our minds, are added by one or more of the evangelists; but while perfectly consistent with those just specified, and not without interest to any reader of the Scriptures, they are not strictly essential to a proper view of the miracle, and are therefore omitted in some of the accounts.

(c) Paulus supposes that the people had, many of them at least, provisions for a meal with them. When, therefore, Jesus had caused the multitude to be seated, and had presented them with all his store, they joyfully added

their own provisions, and so there was enough for all.¹

Of this interpretation it will be sufficient to say, that it cannot be drawn from the text, or reconciled with it.

(*d*) Strauss assails the text by attempting (1.) to identify the feeding of the five thousand here described with the feeding of the four thousand related in Matthew xv. 32-39, and Mark viii. 1-10, (2.) to point out contradictions between the several accounts, and (3.) to show the extra-miraculous and absurd nature of the event. He then pronounces the narratives mythical, and refers to Exodus xvi. 4, sq., 1 Kings xvii. 8-16, 2 Kings iv. 1, 42, as an ample explanation of their origin.²

But it will soon appear that two miracles of feeding the multitudes were wrought, that there are consequently no points of disagreement between the records, and that no good reason can be offered for denying the historical truth of all the narratives. If miracles are not *per se* incredible, the one before us must be believed.

¹ II. p. 301, sq.

² II. p. 212, sq.

§ III. *Feeding of the four thousand*.^{*} Matt. xv. 32-39.; Mark viii. 1-9.

On the accounts of this miracle we offer the following remarks:—

(a) They do not refer to the same event which has just been examined. For (1.) in the present case Jesus approached the scene of the miracle from the borders of Sidon by a circuit north of Galilee and the sea of Tiberias; in the former case, he seems to have passed over the sea from Capernaum in a northeasterly direction to the “desert place.” (2.) In this the place of the miracle was in the region called Decapolis, southeast of Genesaret; in that, it was in the territory of Bethsaida (Julias), northeast of Genesaret. (3.) In this, the time appears to have been summer; in that, it was spring. (4.) Here, the people were apparently a mixed multitude, partly Jews and partly heathen, from the region east of the Jordan; there, they were probably for the most part Jews from the west side of the Jordan. (5.) Here, they had been with Jesus three days; there, they had been with him less than one day. (6.) Here, the number of men was about four

thousand ; there, it was about five thousand. (7.) In this case there were seven loaves ; in that, but five. (8.) In this, there were a *few* little fishes ; in that, *two* small fishes. (9.) Here, the people reclined on the *earth*, for it was summer ; there, on the green *grass*, for it was spring, — a nice coincidence. (10.) In this, seven baskets were filled with the fragments ; in that, twelve. (11.) Here, the baskets were those called *σπυρίδες* ; there, they were those called *κόφλινοι*. (12.) Christ himself says (Mark viii. 19, 20) : “ When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up ? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up ? And they said, Seven.” These differences, and this testimony, authorize us to say that there were two miracles of feeding multitudes, — a fact sufficiently attested by the first two evangelists, who relate them both.

But by their question in reply to Jesus, the disciples, it is said, show that they cannot have witnessed already such a miracle as was now requisite to satisfy the wants of the people. Their question or reply, however,

does not warrant such an inference. The people had now been with Jesus three days, and many of them had doubtless suffered more or less by hunger; yet he had intimated no thought of aiding them by a miracle, and his disciples may have concluded, that he was not intending to do this. Hence their answer. "But when he further asked, how many loaves they had, they at once divined his purpose, and *not a word of doubt followed.*"¹ Indeed, the remark of Alford is scarcely too strong, that "it would have been most unbecoming in them to suggest a miracle." Jesus alone, as they had learned by his response to a suggestion of his mother in the marriage feast at Cana, could know when it was proper for him to work miracles.

(b) The narratives before us agree in their testimony. For they both state (1.) that Jesus called to him his disciples, and said, (2.) "I have compassion on the multitude, (3.) because already three days they remain with me, (4.) and they have nothing to eat: (5.) I am unwilling to send them away fasting, (6.) lest they faint in the road." (7.) His disciples replied: "Whence to us so many

¹ Ebrard, *Kritik*, p. 434.

loaves in the desert, as to fill such a multitude?" (8.) Jesus inquired: "How many loaves have ye?" (9.) And they answered, "Seven." (10.) He then directed the multitude to recline on the ground; (11.) took the loaves, (12.) gave thanks, (13.) broke them, and (14.) gave them to his disciples, (15.) who distributed them to the people; (16.) and also a few small fishes. (17.) They ate and (18.) were filled. (19.) Seven baskets full of fragments remained. (20.) Those who ate were about four thousand. It appears that in this case, as well as in the foregoing, only the men were numbered. How many women and children were present cannot be known.

It is natural to connect the two miracles of feeding the multitudes with the profound discourse of our Lord in which he declares himself to be the true bread from heaven. He is the source not only of joy but of strength. The believer's life depends upon him: its continuance is evermore conditioned on the life-giving and life-sustaining power of Jesus. Says Westcott: "These two are like in their general features, yet most distinct in their spiritual import; nor can we marvel if

Christ showed himself twice to be the bread of life, to the Jew first, and to the Gentile; and prefigured by the breadth of his compassion the extent of a redemption which some would have limited to a chosen race.”¹

(c) In what moment of time shall we place the miracle? When the food was in the hands of Jesus? or in those of his disciples? or in those of the multitude? Not in the last; for in that case we must imagine the bread to have been broken by Jesus into the minutest particles for distribution, so that the process would have seemed for a time ridiculous. Nor in the first; for then Jesus must have placed in the hands of his disciples vast quantities of food, and the labor of distribution must have been great. Hence Meyer is not far from right in saying: “The Lord blessed, and gave the loaves and fishes to the disciples, *as they were*; and then, *during their distribution of them*, the miraculous increase took place, so that they broke and distributed enough for all.” We suppose that Jesus broke the bread partially, and that his disciples carried on the process as they gave to each one of the people his portion.

¹ *Miracles*, pp. 11, 12.

(*d*) Lange denominates the last three miracles *stimmungswunder*, or miracles in the spirit of man. He thinks the hearts of the people were expanded,¹ rather than the loaves of bread. By the might of his divine Spirit, Jesus raised them into a high state of moral joy and ecstasy. Their drink at the marriage in Cana was indeed to their taste real wine, but their senses were elevated and the wine was heavenly, not earthly. Again, no addition was made to the substance of the bread by creative power; but it was merely set free from sin-imposed limits, and could therefore satisfy thousands. The effect of Christ's power upon it was like that of his real presence in the Eucharist. But the fragments! Lange feels this difficulty, and says: "If we will see in the miracle of feeding the multitude the founding of a New Testament feast, we must before all feel how the hearts of Christ's guests were opened by his festal invitation and thanksgiving,—how large, warm, free and fraternal they were made, so that no one

¹ A friend, S. L., suggests that "we may as well suppose their stomachs were contracted." In fact, there is so much of the absurd in most endeavors to set aside the obvious meaning of the gospel narratives of Christ's mighty works, that one is often tempted to treat these endeavors with ridicule.

would keep his own bread for himself, while he shared that of his brother." So the surplus (and how much more?) was furnished by the people *a la Paulus*!

We cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of giving the following beautiful passage from Westcott, before leaving this first part of our work: "The present laws of force and substance are once for all subjected to the Saviour, that we may look onwards in hope to the glories of a new heaven and a new earth. The veil is raised from the mysterious concurrence of events, that we may learn to work with confidence in the economy of the present world. The signs which are given us are enough to kindle our faith, enough to raise us from a blind idolatry of physical laws, enough to quicken us with the consciousness of some nobler Presence, of some higher Power, and yet not so frequent as to bring confusion or uncertainty into that order which, however marred, is yet God's work. With a voice of boundless authority and gentlest comfort, they tell us that the creative energy which we find not only in the first origin of things, but also in successive epochs, is not yet exhausted. They tell us that we are not

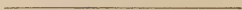
bound up in a system which is eternal and unchangeable. They tell us that there is yet before us a noble transformation, a higher life. They tell us that the beginning of this is already made, and that it is ours to hasten the end.”¹

¹ *Miracles*, p. 31.

PART SECOND.



MIRACLES ON MAN.



CHAPTER I.

HEALING MORTAL SICKNESSES.

THE miracles assigned to this chapter are in some respects less remarkable than those which follow. The diseases cured by the word of Christ are such as often yield to the power of medicine. Yet the circumstances related by the evangelists prove beyond controversy that our Saviour made use of no natural remedies, but effected the cure in every instance by his omnipotent will.

§ I. *Healing the nobleman's son.* John iv. 46–54.

(a) This miracle is not to be confounded with the healing of the centurion's servant, recorded by Matthew viii. 5–13, and Luke vii. 1–10. For while there are but two points of

coincidence, namely, that in both instances the person cured was in Capernaum, and the miracle described was wrought from a distance, there are many points of difference. E. g., in the former narrative (that of John) Christ is said to have been at Cana, but in the latter at Capernaum; in the former, he is said to have wrought the miracle just after his return from the passover through Samaria; in the latter, just after his coming down from the place of his sermon on the Mount; in the former, the person healed is called a son of the petitioner; in the latter, a servant of the petitioner; in the former, the petitioner is denominated a βασιλικός; in the latter, a ἐκατόνταρχος; in the former, he appears to be a Jew; in the latter, he is a Gentile; in the former, he is represented as a man of weak faith; in the latter, as a man of great faith; in the former, Christ virtually refuses to go with him to his house; in the latter, he offers to go thither with him. These points of difference are so many and so important, as to preclude the hypothesis of a single miracle being the basis of narratives so unlike. We must therefore examine the narrative of John by itself.

(b) The particulars mentioned by this evangelist are as follows:—When Jesus had come again into Cana of Galilee,—where he had made water wine,—a certain nobleman (or servant of the king), having a son very sick in Capernaum, went from that city to Cana, and asked the Saviour to go down and heal his son, declaring him to be at the point of death. Jesus replied: “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.” Yet the nobleman urgently renewed his petition: “Lord, come down, ere my child die.” Jesus then said to him, “Go thy way; thy son lives”; and the nobleman, believing this word, departed. But while yet on his way down to Capernaum, his servants met him with the message: “Thy child lives”; and, upon inquiry, he learned the very hour (of the previous day¹) in which the fever left his child, and knew that it was the hour when Jesus said, “Thy son lives.” Thereupon he believed in Christ with all his house. And this, remarks the evangelist, was the second

¹ The father did not reach his home the same day, though his interview with Jesus was about noon. Did the next day begin at eventide, so that the nobleman reached Capernaum late in the evening, as Meyer believes?

sign which Jesus wrought, having returned from Judea into Galilee.

On this record of John we submit a few remarks. (1.) The events related might be known by observation. The journeys, the dialogues, the departure of the fever, might fall under the notice of the senses. Even faith, as bearing fruit in life, is a proper matter of observation. If the nobleman and his family "believed," they doubtless made known their faith by word and act. (2.) The events related were public. All was done in open day. Had it been otherwise, we may be sure that the writer of this gospel, according to his general practice, would have told us. (3.) The events related were likely to attract attention. The father, who applied to Christ, was a man of some consequence, being in the service of Herod Antipas, and Jesus had already drawn upon himself the eyes of many by his mighty works in Jerusalem. Besides, in view of the son's cure, this whole family believed on Christ,—a fact adapted to make the miracle an object of deeper public interest. (4.) John, the writer of this account, was at home in this neighborhood, for Bethsaida was near; and soon after this event he

dwelt for some time with Jesus in Capernaum. He had, therefore, beyond any reasonable doubt, the privilege of familiar intercourse with the nobleman and his family, as well as with Christ. (5.) The bearing of Christ, his seeming repulse of the nobleman, and his subsequent compliance with his request, agrees with his bearing on other occasions. It was almost a custom with him to test the faith of such as wished his aid, to expose its weakness or verify its greatness, and when imperfect, yet sincere, to strengthen it by the gracious exercise of his power. But when there was no faith, yea, rather morbid, wonder-seeking curiosity, without moral root, — when the faith generated by miracles would have been “unbelief in the form of belief” (Luthardt, John I. p. 365), he refused to perform any mighty work. Such an act would have been casting pearls before swine. And so the real harmony (emerging from apparent discrepancy) between our Saviour’s course with the nobleman (possibly Chuza, Luke vii. 3) and his course with the Scribes and Pharisees who would see a sign (Matt. xii. 38–46 ; xvi. 1–4), is manifest but undesigned, and therefore an evidence of the

truth of the narrative. (6.) The miracle related agrees in character with all others wrought by Christ, and with the declared object of his mission. It served the twofold purpose of revealing his spirit and of ratifying his authority. It had a message of its own in addition to its indorsement of Jesus as a teacher come from God. It illustrated the readiness of God to answer intercessory prayer and to confirm a weak faith. It presented Christ to men as the great Physician and Restorer, able to remove those maladies which are the fruit and the sign of sin. At the same time, it showed the spiritual aim of his mission. For evidently the Saviour was not so much affected by the parental anxiety of the nobleman as by his spiritual condition. He grieved that miracles were necessary to establish faith in the hearts of men, but he condescended to work them for so important an end.

(c) The naturalistic interpretation of John's record is untenable. According to this interpretation, Jesus merely assured the father that his son's life was out of danger, without intimating any agency of his own in the case. By his accurate knowledge of disease he was

able, it is supposed, to infer from the nobleman's description of his son's state, that the crisis was now reached, and that the issue must be favorable.¹

But this view of the narrative does not accord with the final remark of John: "This is again the second sign which Jesus did," when compared with the first response of Christ to the nobleman: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." For, by the words "signs and wonders," nothing less than miracles can be meant, while the word "sign" is used by the evangelist with obvious reference to the reply of Jesus, and is equivalent in this connection to the fuller expression employed by him.

Moreover, this view does not accord with the impression which seems to have been made on the nobleman's mind by the second response of Christ: "Thy son lives." Just before this reply he pleads with all a father's heart: "Come down, ere my child die," seeming to ground all his hope on the actual presence of Jesus in his house; but hearing the word of Christ, he at once believes it. Was that word the mere utterance of a med-

¹ *Leben Jesu*, p. 201.

ical opinion? or was there in it a pledge of healing by the power of Christ? If the latter,—if there was that in the tone and look of Jesus which affirmed a miraculous interposition on his part,—we can understand its effect; but if it was the former, we cannot.

Nor, in the last place, does this view accord with the wisdom and rectitude for which Christ was preëminent. To pronounce safe the life of one who was in a high fever, and seemingly at the point of death, and especially to do this without seeing the sufferer, can hardly be vindicated as a prudent act, however great the pathological knowledge of the physician. Much less, if omniscience be denied to Jesus, can such an act be reconciled with his moral integrity. An assurance so positive as to satisfy the father, presupposes for its basis either divine knowledge or moral recklessness.

(*d*) The mythical interpretation is likewise untenable. Admitting that the writer of the fourth gospel means to record a miracle in the passage before us, this interpretation impeaches his testimony by asserting, (1.) that believers in Jesus, as the promised Messiah, would naturally assume his superiority to all

the ancient prophets in working miracles, and would therefore ascribe to him every sort of miracle fitted to excite special wonder; and (2.) that in the case of Naaman, the Syrian, a supernatural cure was effected by bathing in the Jordan, while the prophet, at whose word the miracle was wrought, remained at a distance in his own house. To surpass this Old Testament miracle Jesus must effect as great a cure from a distance by his mere word; he was therefore *presumed* to have done this, and a story embodying the presumption was by degrees put in circulation.¹ Against this view may be urged —

(1.) The *style* of the narrative before us. For this bears all the marks of truth; it is simple, minute, graphic, objective. It says nothing of the motives of Christ or of the nobleman; it eulogizes neither, criticises neither; it confines itself to a bare recital of the events as they occurred. We are unable to detect the slightest effort to do more than this or less than this.

(2.) The *contents* of the narrative. A fever is by no means so incurable a disease as leprosy. Hence, if John's account had been in-

¹ II. p. 131, sq.

vented to offset and surpass the miracle of Naaman's cleansing, not a fever, but leprosy, or some other disease as difficult to remove as this, would have been subjected to the healing word of Christ.

(3.) The *relations* of the narrative. It is a portion of the fourth gospel, homogeneous with all other portions. The blow which assails its truth assails the truth of the whole gospel, nay, of all the gospels. This is but faintly denied by those who defend the mythical hypothesis. But the style and contents of the gospels are utterly opposed to this hypothesis. It is surely absurd to trace the narratives of Christ's miracles, so artless in style, so perfect in morality, so godlike in aim, and blending so harmoniously with the whole life and teaching of Jesus, to the inventive genius of the early Christians. Besides, the period which elapsed between the death of Christ and the publication of the gospels was far too brief for the invention of so extensive and homogeneous a cycle of myths. The growth of such myths must be a work of time. The first germs of them could hardly have been originated before the death of Christ's immediate disciples. And it

must take a long time for the earliest germs of such narratives as we find in the gospels to develop to full maturity. They could not have been brought by any human agency into their present forms, without many revisions and readjustments. The reasons now alleged do plainly forbid the application of the mythical hypothesis to the gospels as a whole, and to the passage before us in particular.

§ II. *Healing Peter's mother-in-law.* Matt. viii. 14-17; Mark i. 29-34; and Luke iv. 38-41.

The different records of this miracle furnish a good illustration of the manner in which several independent witnesses of an event sustain one another. The particulars given by each separate witness are found, when not identical, to be consistent with those attested by all the rest.

(a) The narratives of this miracle differ without contradiction. To verify this we invite attention to the following points. (1.) The house in which the miracle was wrought is called by Matthew "the house of Peter," by Mark, "the house of Simon and Andrew," and by Luke, "the house of Simon." Here it

may be observed, as a slight note of independence, that two of the evangelists give to Peter his early name, Simon, while one of them makes use of his later name, Peter. A similar note may be found in the circumstance that two of them call the house Peter's, while one, and that one Mark, whose gospel is supposed to preserve the testimony of Peter, speaks of it as the house of Simon and Andrew.

As property, it may have belonged equally to the two brothers; but Peter, who was the leading personality generally, may have been especially prominent in this case, because the house was occupied by his own family; by his mother-in-law, at least, and probably by his wife also. Yet it is by no means certain that the brothers were owners of the house (the genitive does not *require* us to suppose this); it may have belonged to the parents of Peter's wife, and have been merely the home of the two brothers while Jesus abode in Capernaum; but on this hypothesis also, though still the residence of both the brothers, it might have been such by virtue of Peter's connection with the family, and so would have been called, by the disciples generally, Peter's house.

Bruno Bauer professes to see a contradiction between the statement that Peter and Andrew were householders in Capernaum, and the words of John (i. 45), that Bethsaida was the "city of Andrew and Peter"; but we should as soon think of getting a sight of the single hair from an angel's head, exhibited twenty years by a priest who could never make out to see it himself, as of catching a glimpse of the point of inconsistency between these statements. To an ordinary mind there would seem to be no absurdity in supposing that two brothers might be natives of one city, and yet, on occasion, lease or even buy a house in another, to which they had removed. But even this supposition is unnecessary; for it is quite possible that no more was meant by "the house of Simon and Andrew," than the house which for the time they made their home.

(2.) Matthew says that Peter's mother-in-law was "laid and sick of a fever"; Mark, that she "lay sick of a fever," and Luke, that she "was taken with a great fever." The first two represent her as prostrated by an active fever, and the last, making use of a current medical distinction, describes her as being in

the power of a *great* fever. The phraseology of the witnesses is here different, and to all appearance independent (I cannot agree with Alford), yet their testimony is not only accordant, but almost identical, in meaning. No jury could reject such testimony.

(3.) Matthew says that Jesus, having come into the house, "saw" Peter's mother-in-law sick; Mark says that "they immediately spoke to him about her"; and Luke, that "they asked him about her." Mark and Luke here supply a fact passed over by Matthew, yet merely a subordinate one, in all respects consistent with his narrative. As Jesus entered the house he was reminded of the sufferer, and asked, perhaps, if he would restore her health. At once he approached her bedside, looked upon her with compassion, and wrought a miraculous cure. Or it may be supposed that the company entered first, not the sick-room, but another; that here Jesus was spoken to and questioned, as two of the evangelists relate; and that, when he passed into the sick-room, he fixed his eyes on the sufferer, and proceeded at once to effect her recovery. This is perhaps the most probable representation.

(4.) In describing the miracle, Matthew says that Jesus "touched her hand and the fever left her"; Mark, that he "took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her"; and Luke, that he "stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her." Here, again, is real harmony with seeming diversity. He "touched her hand," he "took her hand and lifted her up," he "stood over her and rebuked the fever." The verb ἥψατο, used by the first evangelist, and translated "touched," is not inconsistent with Mark's statement that he "took" her hand; for it signifies, according to the best lexicographers, *to cling to, to lay hold of, to grasp*; and though it may be often employed in the New Testament to denote a slight contact, it here retains its original power. On the other hand, the verb ἤγειρεν, which is rendered in our version "lifted up," signifies primarily *to awaken, to rouse up*, and then, dropping the reference to sleep, *to cause to rise, or to raise*. It does not therefore show that Christ lifted up the sick woman by strength of arm. Nor does Luke's statement, that he "stood over her and rebuked the fever," conflict with the idea of his taking her hand. The several state-

ments are complementary to one another, giving us a living picture of the whole scene. As Jesus took the sufferer's hand within his own, he spoke the word which Luke commemorates; instantly the fever departed, health pervaded her entire being, and, following the gentle impulse of his hand, she arose. Each narrative is true as far as it goes, each gives enough to show the source of the healing power; but all are necessary to the completeness of the picture in detail.

(*b*) The several narratives of this miracle agree in the following points: (1.) as to the town where the miracle was wrought, Capernaum; (2.) as to the place in the town, namely, Peter's house; (3.) as to the time of day, before the sun was set; (4.) as to the person healed, Peter's wife's mother; (5.) as to the disease which was cured, to wit, fever; (6.) as to the suddenness and completeness of the cure, "she arose and ministered unto them"; (7.) as to the events which followed in the evening after this miracle, the casting out of demons and the healing of many who were sick.

It may also be noted in this place that James and John, as Mark informs us, accom-

panied Jesus into the house. The omission of the other two evangelists to put on record this fact needs no explanation. Relatively, it was a very unimportant circumstance, yet not on that account without historical value; for it shows that the miracle before us was wrought in the presence of several witnesses. But while Matthew and Luke do not say that James and John entered the house with Jesus, they do, by a single word, intimate that he was not alone; for they mention that the mother-in-law of Peter "arose and ministered unto *them*"; and this pronoun must naturally refer to Jesus and his disciples. At that time, according to the gospels, Andrew and Peter, James and John, had already left all to follow Christ, and we may therefore presume that they accompanied him into the house of Peter. Four of the apostles were therefore in all probability eye-witnesses of this miracle. Moreover, the circumstance that the person healed was related to a leading apostle may account for the description of this miracle by three different evangelists, though it was less remarkable, perhaps, than some other works of Jesus.

The cure was perfect as well as instant-

neous. "The completeness of her restoration," says Alexander, "was evinced by her returning to her ordinary household duties, so that she who just before lay helpless in their presence, was now serving them," with food, etc. Such a result can only be ascribed to extraordinary Divine action, and is wholly inconsistent with the naturalistic hypothesis.

Whether this miracle was performed with any reference to the hospitable service which Peter's mother-in-law was anxious and needed to render, we cannot tell; but there is reason to believe that it was an act of gracious love to that apostle and his fellow disciples; and it shows how safely the Christian may commit his friends to Jesus. Many a blessing comes to the believer's family in consequence of Christ's love to him and in answer to his modest requests. Our blessed Lord honored the natural relations of life, and we have perhaps in this instance a miracle wrought in response to intercession founded on such relations.

(c) In the evening after this day, when the sun was set (for it had been a Sabbath and many of the Jews were scrupulous), the people brought to Jesus in large numbers

those who were sick, and he healed them all. A careful scrutiny of the several narratives of this miraculous activity (see Matt. viii. 16, 17, Mark i. 32-34, Luke iv. 40, 41) will disclose the same harmony in diversity which has already attracted our attention. But we must ask our readers to make this examination for themselves.

Matthew, however, says these miracles of healing were performed, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses," and we cannot pass over this declaration without remark. It may be the key to a great mystery. The words quoted by the evangelist are descriptive, in the original passage (Is. liii. 4), of vicarious suffering. It is next to impossible to understand them otherwise. Hence in the miraculous healing of disease, a fruit if not a penalty of sin, Jesus appears to have had a full *sense* of the evil and pain which he removed. His anguish in the garden and on the cross was but the *culmination* of that which he felt almost daily, while healing the sick, cleansing the leprous, or forgiving the penitent. By the holy sharpness of his vis-

*

ion he pierced quite through the veil of sense and natural causes, and saw in *moral evil* the black root of all disorder, the source of all suffering. He could therefore heal neither bodily nor spiritual disease without a deep consciousness of his special relation to man as the Substitute, the Redeemer, the Lamb of God, who was to bear the penalty of a world's guilt. And it is not, we believe, too much to suppose that by a superhuman and perfect compassion he took into his own holy consciousness and truly realized the bodily as well as the spiritual suffering which he removed from others.¹ If these remarks are just, the language of Matthew offers us a glimpse of moral laws the most profound and of spiritual processes the most affecting. It lifts the miraculous agency of Christ into a more vital union with the great end of his mediatorial work, and clothes it with more touching interest to every Christian heart.

§ III. *Healing a dropsical man.* Luke xiv. 1-6.

It will be borne in mind that the only

¹ See Westcott on *The Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles*, pp. 44, 45.

account of this miracle transmitted to us is very brief, giving no clue to the progress which had been made already by the disease. As however the dropsy is often incurable, it may be presumed that the man who now came to Jesus despaired of help from any other quarter.

The particulars mentioned by Luke are these. Jesus went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, and those who were there watched him. There was also present before him a man who had the dropsy. Seeing the sufferer, Jesus said to the lawyers and Pharisees: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" But they were silent. Then he took the man and healed him and let him go, saying to them: "Who is there of you, whose ass or ox shall fall into a pit, and he will not straightway draw him up on the Sabbath day?" And they could not answer his words.

The narrative of Luke bears every mark of truthfulness, consistent with such brevity. His language is clear, direct, unambiguous. The event did not take place in a corner. It was preceded by an important query,

adapted to fix every eye upon Jesus and the afflicted man before him, and it was followed by an unanswerable justification. Indeed, the evangelist intimates that even before the question: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" jealous eyes were upon Christ, and his words were uttered in reply to thoughts which anticipated and condemned his course. If so, the scene was in striking harmony with several others in the life of Christ.

Whether the dropsical man was already in the house when Jesus entered, or was brought in afterwards, cannot be ascertained. He was there; but how long he had been there or by whose aid he had reached the place, we know not. Perhaps he was quietly introduced by friends, and was first noticed by the disciples when before Jesus, mutely pleading for relief. But evidently he was there, in consequence of his own faith or that of his friends, to solicit aid from Christ. The miracle has indeed been called a miracle of antagonism; and Christ may have had respect in working it, not only to the moral condition of the sufferer and his friends, but also to the ritual scrupulosity of the Pharisees respecting the Sabbath; thus bearing witness

against their error and perversion of the law and vindicating his own authority.

Paulus denies, as usual, that the evangelist intends to represent Jesus as working a miracle and remarks: "One has no reason to think that here was a *hydrops consummatus*, and only by such a hypothesis does the event become incredible."¹ But does not the language of Luke suppose the instantaneous recovery of the sick man? a recovery effected, without any surgical or medical process, by the power of Christ? Paulus says, to be sure, that Jesus "probably took the man aside, and examined the effect of the remedies previously used." But of this there is no hint in the text; nay, just the opposite may fairly be inferred from it. The cure was wrought publicly in the presence of those who were watching for opportunities to accuse the Saviour of disobedience to the law. The naturalistic interpretation does violence to the obvious meaning of Luke's account.

Strauss freely admits this. "An instant removal of water collected under the skin (!) could only be secured by a surgical opera-

¹ II. p. 470.

tion or by an absolute ⁴miracle. Now as we have from the outset rejected the latter, and as the former is against the course pursued by Jesus in other instances, we cannot accept this narrative as historically true, but must explain it as a variation on the theme of Sabbath-healings.”¹ In other words: as Jesus was not a surgeon and as a miracle is not possible, this narrative, however closely connected with the teaching of Christ, must be mythical. The evangelist describes an “absolute miracle” and therefore his account must needs be a myth! To such language we have replied in our Introduction, and whoever believes in a personal God will accept that reply as satisfactory. But an atheist or pantheist will as certainly reject it. Human testimony has scarcely the weight of a straw in his mind when adduced in support of any event which testifies of a living God.

§ IV. *Healing the centurion's servant.* Matt. viii. 5-13, and Luke vii. 1-10.

On these accounts we remark,

(a) Their diversities may be easily reconciled. Strauss observes that the sufferer is

¹ II. p. 140.

called by Luke δοῦλος ἑντιμος^{*}, but by Matthew ὁ παῖς αὐτοῦ; but he might have added that he is called by the centurion, according to the testimony of both evangelists, ὁ παῖς μου; the word παῖς being applicable to servants as well as children. But to have stated this fact directly and simply would have been to refute his own charge of disagreement between the records. The difference between the two evangelists in the use of δοῦλος and παῖς is evidently a note of independence and truthfulness, enhancing the value of their testimony.

Again, Luke says of the sufferer that he was "sick and ready to die," and Matthew, that he was "sick of the palsy and grievously tormented." As to the *kind* of disease, the latter is more specific, as to the *stage* of it, the former is more explicit. But there is no contradiction between them, unless it can be shown that a man "sick of the palsy" cannot be "ready to die." At the same time it should be remembered that the word palsy or paralysis was used more comprehensively by the ancients than it is by the moderns. It was applied to disease attended by excruciating pains, as the gout, as well as

to disease affecting the nerves of volition merely.¹

Lastly, the centurion himself, according to the first evangelist, came to Jesus with his request, while, according to the third, he sent the elders of the Jews to bear it. But "this diversity," said Dr. Robinson, "is satisfactorily explained by the old law maxim: *Qui facit per alium, facit per se*. Matthew narrates briefly; Luke gives the circumstances more fully. In like manner, in John iv. 1, Jesus is said to baptize, when he did it by his disciples. In John xix. 1, and elsewhere, Pilate is said to have scourged Jesus; certainly not with his own hands. In Mark x. 35, James and John come to Jesus with a certain request; in Matt. xx. 20, it is their mother who prefers the request. In 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, God moves David to number Israel; in 1 Chron. xxi. 1, it is Satan who provokes him." This explanation was not satisfactory to Storr, and he preferred to assume three instances of healing from a distance: first, that of the

¹ See Winer's R. W. B., article *Paralytische*; Trench on the Miracles of Christ, p. 18; and 1 Mac. ix. 55, 56, where Alcimus, "taken with the palsy," is said to have died presently, with "great torment."

nobleman's son (John); secondly, that of a centurion's son or servant (Matthew); and thirdly, that of another centurion's servant (Luke). The centurion mentioned by Matthew had a knowledge of the cure of the nobleman's son from a distance; hence his faith. The centurion described by Luke was acquainted with both the other cures; hence also his faith. But he was distinguished by his humility. It is, indeed, possible that Matthew and Luke refer to different miracles, but the points of agreement are so numerous and striking as to render such a view very improbable. (See below.)

The circumstance of his not being a Jew may have led the centurion to employ the "elders" in presenting his request, and also to think that Jesus would prefer not to enter his house. Moreover, his official position, and especially his liberality in building them a synagogue, would be likely to make the elders willing to serve him in the way described.

(b) The points of agreement between them are essential. For both narratives unite in saying, (1.) that Jesus was now returning from the place of his Sermon on the Mount; (2.)

that he had just entered Capernaum when the request for aid met him; (3.) that the petitioner was a centurion; (4.) that Jesus was disposed to go to the centurion's house and heal his servant; (5.) that the centurion objected to his going, for two reasons, (6.) one of which indicated deep humility, "I am not worthy," etc., (7.) and the other strong faith, "speak the word only," etc.; (8.) that to explain his faith he made use of a very apt and natural illustration; (9.) that Jesus yielded without remonstrance to his objection; (10.) that he observed his faith with wonder; (11.) that he commended his faith without speaking of his humility; (12.) that in commending his faith he compared it with what he had found in Israel; and (13.) that according to his faith, his servant was healed even from a distance.

These are numerous and striking points of agreement, and they can never be explained on any hypothesis but that of historical truth. It is also worthy of notice that the character of the centurion is essentially the same in both narratives, though his humility is set forth more distinctly by Luke. The bearing of Christ is likewise the same in both narra-

tives. His promptness in complying with the request for aid, his wonder at the singular faith of the petitioner, and his emphatic approval of that faith, are striking features of the event, common to both records. This agreement as to the bearing of Jesus and of the centurion is very forcible when the differences of detail between the evangelists are borne in mind.

The miracle before us illustrates the power of intercession for others, and the promptness of God in answering prayer, when the moral conditions permit an immediate answer. It also exhibits Christ as the image of the invisible God, unrestricted by space, omnipotent, gracious, the Saviour of Gentile as well as Jew.

(c) The naturalistic interpretation assumes that Jesus was either asked by the centurion to give a prescription merely, which could be easily applied by a servant, or else to send one of his disciples to see and cure the patient. Paulus advocates the latter view, but is shown to be in error by Strauss. The closing verse of Luke's narrative sets aside the hypothesis of a gradual recovery. Christ's wonder at the centurion's faith is equally

fatal to that hypothesis. To suppose a military officer illustrating his belief that Christ need not go himself since he had sufficient authority over his disciples to send one of them to the sick man with medicine ! And then to suppose Jesus astonished at so great faith in his authority as a master or skill as a leech !

(*d*) The mythical interpretation has been given in our notice of the healing of the nobleman's son. For Strauss labors hard to show that the narratives before us are merely different versions of the story recorded by John iv. 46-54. By making these three narratives relate to the same event, and by marking distinctly the points of disagreement, he undertakes to destroy their historical character and pave the way for his mythical theory of their origin. We have already shown that two distinct miracles are described, thus answering his negative criticism ; it is therefore unnecessary for us to assail his positive view. When the narratives are shown to be unhistorical, it will be time enough to show that they cannot be mythical.

CHAPTER II.

HEALING CHRONIC DISEASES.

THESE diseases may be pronounced for the most part incurable by human skill. If they were healed at all by Christ, it must have been miraculously. Yet it will be wise to judge every instance of healing by itself, though all may have certain features in common.

§ I. *Healing a Paralytic in Capernaum.* Matt. ix. 1-8; Mark ii. 1-12; and Luke v. 17-26.

(a) These narratives are in no respect contradictory. A chronological disagreement between the first evangelist and the other two has indeed been alleged, but not established; for Matthew and Mark, surely, do not profess to give the events of our Saviour's life in the order of time. Says Westcott:¹ "An inspired order is the correlative of an inspired abridgment;" and further on: "The examination of a few chapters of the synop-

¹ Introduction to the Study of the Gospels, p. 344.

tical gospels will leave little doubt that temporal sequence was not the standard of their arrangement." If this remark is true of all the synoptical gospels, it is preëminently true of the first. We are therefore persuaded that some of the events recounted by Matthew prior to his narrative of the miracle before us, took place in reality after it. This is probably true of the Sermon on the Mount.

Again, the accounts which Mark and Luke give of this miracle, or rather of the events preliminary to it, are said to be very different from that of Matthew. Admitting the difference, we deny any discrepancy. The first gospel says that "they brought to Jesus a paralytic, lying on a bed;" the third says the same, but notes also the fact that, owing to a great crowd, they had to take the sick man "upon the house, and let him down with the bed through the tiles;" and the second says the same, adding only this, that the paralytic was "borne of four," and that they "made a hole through the roof in order to let him down." Surely addition and explanation are not contradiction; and here is no ground whatever for impeaching the truth of these narratives.

Again, Matthew calls the couch on which

the paralytic was borne a κλίνη, Mark, a κράββατος, and Luke, a κλίνη and a κλινίδιον; but there is no reason whatever for doubting the fitness of any one of these terms to describe the article in question. It can hardly be presumed that Luke contradicts himself; yet he uses the very word employed by Matthew, and also a synonym for the one employed by Mark. Indeed, the use of three different terms by the three evangelists to designate the same article, proves the independence of their testimony, and enhances its value.

But there is another variation: Matthew and Mark agree in testifying that Jesus addressed the paralytic by the title "child," while Luke gives "man" as the word used in the address — τέκνον ἄνθρωπε. This difference is worthy of close examination. We may suppose that our Saviour uttered the word "man," but with a look and tone which made it equivalent to the more kindly and gracious term "child." If so, and if he spoke in Aramaic, Luke has translated *ad literam*, Matthew and Mark *ad sensum*. The former has given us more exactly the word of Jesus, but not so fully his meaning as the latter. Or, we may suppose, though with less proba-

bility, that our Saviour used the term "child," but with a look and tone befitting an address to a stranger, and properly represented by the term "man;" in which case Matthew and Mark may be said to preserve the *letter*, while Luke preserves the *spirit* of the address. Or, finally, we may suppose that in the word of Christ, as uttered by him, was contained the sense of both these terms, or a sense intermediate between the two, so that by yielding our minds to the influence of both, allowing each to modify the other, we obtain the best possible idea of his meaning. If, however, this last hypothesis be correct, why, it may be asked, was not each one of the evangelists led by inspiration to put both these words into the lips of Jesus? Because this would have misrepresented the style and weakened the force of his speech. His words were powerful, because they were all freighted with deep meaning. His language was condensed. To have expanded his discourses by a paraphrase would have been to mar their beauty and strength. Better give nine tenths of his meaning in one word, than all of it in two; for the very style of our Saviour's teaching revealed his divinity.

(b) These narratives agree in all essential points; in affirming, e.g. (1.) That the miracle recorded was wrought in a house; (2.) that the disease cured was paralysis; (3.) that the sufferer was brought to Jesus on a couch; (4.) that Christ acted in view of "*their* faith,"—the faith of more than one;—(5.) that he first said to the paralytic, "Thy sins are forgiven thee"; (6.) that some of the Scribes (and Pharisees, Luke) who sat by, reasoned in their hearts, charging him with blasphemy; (7.) that Christ knew their thoughts and re-proved them; (8.) that he placed the claim of power to forgive sins on the same level with the claim of power to cure paralysis by a word; (9.) that he began to state his willingness to assure them of his power to do the former by doing the latter; (10.) that instead of completing this statement in words addressed to the Scribes, he finished it by words of power addressed to the paralytic; (11.) that he thus claimed for the Son of man upon earth power to forgive sins; (12.) that he directed the sufferer before him to rise, take his own couch, and go to his house; (13.) that the paralytic at once arose and went forth, according to this direction; (14.)

that the people saw this and were filled with astonishment. Some of these coincidences are very exact and striking. For instance, the words of Jesus: "Thy sins are forgiven thee," are precisely the same in all; the question, "Whether is it easier to say," etc., is almost the same in all; and the unfinished address to the Scribes is exactly the same in all. The last instance is especially worthy of consideration; for the form of the sentence is peculiar, and in all probability just that used by Christ. It is also noticeable, that Jesus in this address calls the attention of captious men on the spot to this miracle as an evidence of his divine prerogatives.

The action of those who brought this helpless sufferer to Christ was accepted by him as a strong expression of their faith in his power to heal and of their desire to have him restore the paralytic. Moreover, our Saviour's words to the sick of the palsy presuppose true penitence in him. The miracle before us was therefore wrought in answer to *united* prayer, to intercession and entreaty. This miracle also points to the close connection between bodily and spiritual evil, and shows that Christ was by virtue of his office

and nature the Healer of both. Yet he never consented to remove bodily ill, the fruit and sign of sin, unless he could at the same time reach the source and do somewhat to remove sin itself. As a physical malady the palsy was analogous to the moral stupor and impotence produced by sin.

(*c*) The naturalistic interpretation of these passages is untenable. According to Paulus Christ perceived that the paralytic now put before him was of a melancholy temperament, and thoroughly disheartened by the belief that his weakness was a punishment from God for past sins. He also perceived that the man had really strength to walk, if he could be induced to use it. The first thing, therefore, was to destroy his superstitious notion of a divine judgment resting upon him in the form of sickness. This Jesus effected by saying to him with an assured and decisive tone: "Thy sins have been forgiven thee." As, however, this language was misinterpreted by the Scribes, he said to them in effect: "I could as easily have said at first, Thou shalt be made whole, as to have said, Thy sins have been forgiven thee; but it was necessary to say the latter in order

to remove his dejection and effect his recovery." Having thus prepared the way, Christ directs the paralytic to rise up and walk. Inspired with new confidence, the poor man makes the effort and is successful. The work is now virtually done, for joyful in hope he will rapidly recover.¹

Such is the exposition of Paulus, ingenious but unsound. (1.) It does not accord with the remark of all three evangelists, that the first words were uttered in view of "*their* faith." The efficacy of Christ's words in removing a false impression and inspiring hope might depend on the faith of the supposed hypochondriac, but not on that of his friends. Yet the gospels are not even careful to say that the paralytic himself was one of those who believed; much less do they intimate that his confidence in Jesus was *especially* necessary, was in fact the prerequisite to a cure.

(2.) It does not accord with the import of Christ's words to the paralytic: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." For, resting on the tense of the verb, it translates: "Thy sins have been forgiven thee," and supposes the sen-

¹ I. p. 514. sq.

tence merely didactic. But the perfect is here used as an emphatic present, and the language is plainly authoritative. So it was understood by the Scribes, and so it was explained by Christ himself.

(3.) It does not accord with Christ's answer to the Scribes: "Whether is it easier," etc. They had charged him in their hearts with arrogating a prerogative of God by professing to forgive sins. Instead of rejecting this interpretation of his language, his entire reply accepts and indorses it. This is true of the question to which we now particularly refer. For this question evidently places the forgiving of sins and the instantaneous cure of the sick on the same level. Says Meyer: "The sense is this: The one is no easier to say than the other; to both belongs the same divine ἐξουσία; but that ye may know that I have said the former with full right, I will now add the latter."

(4.) It does not accord with the impression made by the event. The great astonishment produced by the change in the paralytic can only be explained by supposing a real miracle. The cure was instantaneous. The paralytic went out whole and strong.

(d) The mythical interpretation is equally untenable. It finds a motive for this legend in Isaiah xxxv. 3 and 6: "Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees," and "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart." "In view of these passages," says Strauss, "a derivation of the gospel narratives from Messianic expectations is exceedingly obvious.¹" Yet he is in favor of accepting a naturalistic view of the occurrence. Jesus may have effected the recovery of one suffering from mental depression and nervous weakness by words of cheer leading him to put forth his energies. This hypothesis has been already considered. It would now be easy to show that the three narratives in question do not represent a popular legend. The points of coincidence are too numerous and the seeming discrepancies too obvious to admit of such an explanation. It cannot, however, be necessary to specify them in detail.

§ II. *Restoring the withered hand.* Matt. xii. 9-14; Mark iii. 1-6; and Luke vi. 6-11.

As to these narratives we remark,

¹ II. p. 65, sq.

(a) They offer no points of actual contradiction. The seeming discrepancies are as follows:

(1.) A difference as to the time when the miracle was wrought. The synoptical gospels agree in relating this cure immediately after giving an account of the plucking of corn by the disciples on the Sabbath. Matthew makes the transition by saying: "And, having departed thence, he went into their synagogue;" Mark, by saying: "And he entered again into the synagogue;" and Luke, by saying: "And it came to pass also on another Sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught." The language of Mark is obviously indefinite; but that of Matthew is said to contradict that of Luke. This, however, is a mistake. For Matthew does not identify the Sabbath of going through the cornfields with that of restoring the withered hand. The words *μεταβὰς ἐκεῖθεν* signify elsewhere in his gospel a journey of some length, from one region to another;¹ such a journey as would hardly have been made by Jesus on the Sabbath; and the expression "*their* synagogue" means the syn-

¹ See chap. xv. 29, xi. 1, and cf. Jo. vii. 3.

agogue of the people of the place to which he had now come.¹ Hence the chronology of Matthew does not conflict with that of Luke; possibly even it supports it. Ebrard's comment is very strange, viz: "Since Luke troubled himself very little on the whole about the order of events, it may be presumed that he wishes to be understood 'on another Sabbath, *so far as he knows*;' for the second event took place on a Sabbath day as well as the first, but that it was the *same Sabbath* he did not know."² This is surely treating the record of Luke with very little respect; for what he says is that it was on *another* Sabbath, not *so far as he knows*, but *as he knows*; for he professes to know the truth of what he writes.

(2.) A difference of details in describing the miracle. According to Matthew some of those in the synagogue went so far as to ask Christ "if it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath day"? According to Mark and Luke they "watched him, if he would heal on the Sabbath day"; and Luke adds that "He knew their thoughts, and said to the man

¹ See Alford, De Wette, and Olshausen, on the word *αὐτῶν*.

² *Kritik der Evangel. Gesch.* p. 414, note. 2te Aufl.

who had the withered hand: Rise and stand in the midst." How can both these representations be correct? The details we suppose may have been as follows. When Jesus entered the synagogue he saw, besides the people in general, two parties; a man whose right hand was withered, anxious to be healed, and a number of Scribes and Pharisees who were watching for an occasion to accuse him of breaking the law. The latter, as he perceived, were almost expecting him to heal the unfortunate man present, but were ready to denounce such an act as a violation of the Sabbath. Perhaps they had been doing this in the ears of the people. Christ, knowing their thoughts, directed the sufferer to rise and stand in the middle of the room, where he could be seen by all. And now, while the people anticipate the healing word, a voice from the group of conspirators proposes the question: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" Jesus replies by another question: "I will ask you what is lawful on the Sabbath, to do good or to do evil? to save life or to destroy?" Adding also, "What man shall there be of you that shall have one sheep, if it fall into a

pit on the Sabbath, will he not lay hold of it and lift it out? How much better then is a man than a sheep? So that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Then looking round upon all with indignation and grief, he said to the man: "Stretch forth thine hand." He stretched it forth and it was whole as the other. In this sketch are included all the particulars mentioned by the three evangelists, and we perceive no incongruity or improbability in it.

The other differences between the narratives are unimportant, or rather important only as they show the independence of the several testimonies which they bring.

(b) They offer important points of agreement and confirmation. They agree in testifying (1.) that the cure was wrought in a synagogue; (2.) that it was the restoration of a withered hand; (3.) that the person healed was a man (not a woman or a child); (4.) that certain Pharisees were present in the synagogue, watching Jesus, to find a pretext for accusing him; (5.) that they looked for such a pretext in his breaking *their* law of the Sabbath; (6.) that they expected him to break this law by healing the man with

the withered hand; (7.) that Jesus asserted beforehand the propriety of doing good on the Sabbath; (8.) that he then commanded the sufferer to stretch forth his withered hand; (9.) that the latter promptly obeyed this command; (10.) that his hand was instantly and perfectly restored; (11.) that the Pharisees straightway proceeded to take counsel against Jesus.

These manifestly are the essential points, and on these the narratives unite their testimony. In minor particulars they supplement one another, yet without any design of doing this. Each narrative appears to have been written independently of the others. No one of them professes to correct or complete the rest. As a whole the testimony is perfect, and will bear any amount of scrutiny.

This miracle may be called a miracle of unsolicited grace. If we think only of the man whose right hand was withered, and observe that he did not place himself, so far as the records show, intentionally before Jesus, nor ask for aid, the act of our Saviour seems to be that of the Good Shepherd going after the lost sheep, an illustration of the sovereign

favor of God, a type of his prevenient grace, drawing men to himself, and delivering them from sin and death. And it is somewhat singular that so many miracles wrought upon the Sabbath have this character. But this miracle may also be called one of antagonism. The scrupulosity and hatred of the Pharisees seem to have been in part the occasion of it. Christ then and there chose to vindicate his own authority, and to explain, in opposition to their perversion of it, the divine law of the Sabbath. He was jealous for the truth, and saw fit not merely to utter it in speech, but also to illustrate and honor it in action—in such action, too, as would prove his right to interpret the Divine will, and would leave them without excuse, should they withstand his authority.

(*c*) The naturalistic interpretation of these accounts is groundless and perverse. Paulus holds that Jesus had previously undertaken the cure of the sufferer's hand; that the Pharisees were aware of this, and hence watched him to see if he would do the work of a physician on the Sabbath; and that Jesus, in view of their hostility, examined the sufferer's hand in public—an act which he would other-

wise have done at home. He says: "The hand of the man was sick, but the arm was well enough to stretch out the hand. Jesus naturally wishes this to be done, in order to look at the hand which was diseased, and, without doubt, bound up. The man stretches it forth. But Jesus finds nothing more to do. The hand is already restored. Hence, as Jesus did nothing at the time, the Pharisees had *no* pretext for an actual charge against him before the court of the synagogue." In support of this view Paulus urges these reasons:—

(1.) "The evangelists did not esteem the cure miraculous, since none of them speak of it as exciting *wonder* in the beholders." The weakness of this reason is obvious. Not to insist upon the fact that the evangelists do not profess to put everything which they knew on record, the persons before whom especially this cure was wrought were not in a mood to be filled with wonder at any display of divine power. Yet the argument comes with a singularly bad grace from one who allows no weight to the wonder of the beholders, when it is recorded.

(2.) "The Pharisees must have known that Jesus had previously undertaken the cure of

the man, since they watched to see if he would treat him medically on the Sabbath." This reason is, if possible, weaker than the preceding. The course of the Pharisees is perfectly explained by supposing that they knew he was wont to heal diseases even on the Sabbath, and that they wished to find an accusation against him.

(3.) "The cure must have been effected by a medical process and not by a word of power, since the utterance of the latter could not be esteemed by any one a violation of the Sabbath." This, too, is an error. Pharisaic tradition forbade healing on the Sabbath; dangerous sickness excepted. This is shown by the passages cited by Wettstein and Schöttgen under Matt. xii. 10. But a withered hand was not dangerous to life, however incurable it might be.

It will be noticed that Paulus represents the hand only, and not the arm as affected with disease — a view which rests upon his hypothesis of a cure by medical appliances, and not upon the meaning of the word *χείρ*. For he himself says: "Whether merely the hand suffered or also the whole fore-arm is not stated;" and ἡ *χείρ* is defined by Liddell

and Scott, "*the hand*, or rather *the hand and arm, the arm*;" by Pape, "*the hand, fist, arm*." Winer, and indeed most interpreters, seem rightly to understand it of the whole arm in these narratives.

As to the disease brought to view in the passages before us, Winer¹ defines it as "local atrophy," a "wasting away of the diseased member, caused by defective nourishment — a shrinking in size, and generally a loss of power to move. Once seated, it is incurable, and ends with the death of the member." This description rests upon the best authorities. Hence, to justify his hypothesis, Paulus was compelled not only to confine the disease to the mere hand, but also to deny its proper character. He does this by attempting to show that the Jews ascribed "a sudden *falling asleep*, or stiffening of a limb, a partial *resolutio virium* or paralysis, to a drying up of the nutritive fluids, although such phenomena ought rather to be ascribed to some *stoppage* in the *circulation* of the *blood*, or some *check* upon the *power* of the *nerves* or *muscles*;" and he goes on to say that in the present case "we have no reason to think of a *total laming*, or of a

¹ R. W. B. I. 674.

hand dried up by atrophy, unless we wish first to make the disease incurable, in order then to find the healing incomprehensible.”¹

But his attempt is wholly unsuccessful, and his conclusion false. The formal prominence given to the stretching forth of the hand in the gospel narratives is fatal to the naturalistic view. In this very act, not in any subsequent removal of bandages and medical examination, the narratives reach their highest point; and evidently, according to the evangelists, the cure was wrought, in the order of nature before, if in the order of time, with this act.²

(*d*) The mythical view is also inadmissible. It does not explain the air of sobriety, the absence of exaggeration, or the remarkable harmony in diversity, which these narratives exhibit. Strauss argues that the myth recorded in 1 Kings xiii. 1-6, gave rise to the one before us. But if, as he presumes, the evangelists were so careful to show that Christ surpassed all the ancient prophets in working miracles, it is at least singular that they have nowhere spoken of this fact directly. They have, beyond question, displayed consummate

¹ II. p. 69, sq.

² De Wette Meyer Fritzsche, Strauss.

skill in writing *as if* they were only anxious to record what Jesus said or did, or else they have done this without art, because art was needless in recording facts. No man, I am sure, who believes in the possibility of miracles, will be able to rest satisfied with the mythical exposition of the gospel narratives. Only a mind which was ingenious and skeptical enough to work out this strange exposition, would be content to ascribe such skill in the fabrication of legends to the early Christians.

§ III. *Healing the infirm man.* John v. 1, sq.

Apart from the cure wrought by Christ, this passage brings before us two important questions, one respecting the particular feast of the Jews referred to in the first verse, and the other respecting the healing properties of the pool named Bethesda. The first question lies remote from our present investigation, and we can only subjoin a note respecting it.¹

¹ In favor of the Passover may be alleged the fact that pious Jews were expected to celebrate it in Jerusalem, that Christ himself was accustomed to do this, and that a longer period is thus secured for our Saviour's public ministry, namely, about three years and a half; but against it the fact that Christ must

The second question lies nearer the line of our present course of study, yet not strictly in that line; for the reality of a miracle by Christ in healing the impotent man does not depend on the reality of miraculous cures in Bethesda. As to the latter, however, the following remarks are submitted:—

(1.) The last clause of verse third, “waiting for the moving of the water,” and the whole of verse fourth, are wanting in some of the best manuscripts. Indeed, the external authorities for and against these words are nearly equal. The same may also be said of the internal. For while the seventh verse seems to imply some such facts as are stated in the doubtful portion, and thus to plead for its genuineness, the many peculiar words and manuscript variations of this portion excite suspicion and argue interpolation. Perhaps

then be supposed to have withheld his presence from Jerusalem, confining his labors to Galilee, a full year and a half. In favor of the feast of Purim may be urged the circumstance that it accords with the other chronological notes of the fourth gospel, and escapes the difficulty just named in respect to the Passover; but against it the circumstance that this was not a feast likely for any known reason to attract Jesus to Jerusalem, and that it favors a restriction of our Saviour’s public ministry to about two years and a half. The reasons in favor of the Passover seem to us predominant.

the reasons for supposing this portion of the text to be spurious do slightly outweigh those in favor of its genuineness.

(2.) If these words were not written by John, they were doubtless added in the first place by scholiasts as marginal notes to explain "*why* the multitude of sick persons lay in the porches, and to *what* the moving of the water in verse seven referred, and *why* the impotent man had remained there so long."¹ With this view of the text we might find it sufficient to say with Kitto that "at certain seasons the pool of Bethesda received the overflow of some hidden but highly salubrious spring or springs, causing a bubbling commotion at the point of influx, and whoever stepped in *there*, and laved his body in those healthful waters, before their effect was lost by diffusion through the large pool into which they came, was healed of his disease."¹ For certainly, apart from the fourth verse, this narrative does not compel us to suppose any supernatural agency associated with the action of the water itself. In verses two, three, and seven, we are taught by implication that the

¹ Tregelles on the *Printed Text of the Greek Testament*. p. 246.

waters of this pool were believed to be curative at certain times when disturbed, and that is all; we are not informed that every one who entered them at the proper time was made whole, whatever his disease; nor can this be fairly inferred (Kitto goes too far) from the presence of a "multitude of the sick, blind, lame, withered," in the porches.

(3.) If these words were written by John, then surely miraculous cures were sometimes wrought in the pool of Bethesda. For even if the evangelist merely repeats, without intending to indorse, a current opinion, where he says that "an angel came down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water," he distinctly affirms that "whoever first, after this troubling, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had;" and this statement contains two facts which cannot be reasonably traced to the simple efficacy of mineral waters, namely, (*a*) that any disease whatsoever was cured; and (*b*) that only one person could be restored on the same occasion. But in reality, if the fourth verse is genuine, the evangelist must be held responsible for the truth of what he relates, since he does not give it as an opinion of the Jews,

but rather as a simple fact. And against his testimony nothing can be urged, save the silence of Josephus and the Rabbins. These do not mention the pool of Bethesda. But the *argumentum e silentio* is notoriously weak in most instances, and the present offers no special claim to be made an exception. To place this argument on a level with the written word of John, is to trample on the plainest rules of evidence.

We now proceed to examine the account which John gives of the healing of the infirm man by the word of Jesus. And it may be well to notice :

(a) The facts attested by the evangelist. (1.) The sufferer had passed thirty-eight years in sickness or infirmity. This is stated in the fifth verse. In his commentary on the gospels Paulus took the ground that the age of the *man*, and not of his *infirmity*, is given in this verse ; but in his "Leben Jesu," a later work, he has acceded to the common and correct interpretation. The disease was therefore of very long standing.

(2.) The sufferer was quite infirm. Two facts show this, namely, he was prostrate on a bed, and he could move but slowly without

help. (v. 7.) He was a confirmed cripple, but not altogether helpless.

(3.) His infirmity was probably the fruit of sinful indulgence. For Jesus warns him to sin no more, lest a worse evil should come upon him; intimating thereby that his thirty-eight years of suffering were the result of some special act or course of sin. (v. 14.)

(4.) He was evidently poor and friendless. Otherwise he would have been able to secure the help of some one to put him into the pool in season. But whether his poverty and friendlessness were due to the *character* of his former sins, cannot now be ascertained; it is perhaps reasonable to suppose they were.

(5.) The cure effected by Christ was instantaneous and perfect. "Immediately the man was made whole, took up his bed and walked." (v. 9.) This language is clear and decisive.

(6.) The cure was wrought in public. Not a few, it may be presumed, heard the command of Jesus, and saw the impotent man rise and bear away his couch. Whether any of them knew the Saviour is not stated, and whether the clause, "a multitude being in the place," was added to show *why* Jesus left the

spot so soon, or *how* he could leave it unknown to the infirm man, is doubtful.

(7.) The bearing of the impotent man was peculiar. When asked: "Wilt thou be made whole?" he was not much impressed by the personality of Christ; his thoughts flowed in their wonted channel; to enter the pool at the proper moment was his last hope. He failed to catch the meaning of our Saviour's question and to feel the power of his presence. He was penitent, but without self-respect. Neglected, and perhaps despised by men, his interest in their affairs had died out, and his quickness of observation, if not his manliness of character, had suffered with his body. Hence, feeling his strength restored, he yielded to the command of Jesus, but timidly, without exultation, (cf. Acts iii. 8,) not even venturing to ask the name of his benefactor. Hence, too, when reminded that it was unlawful for him to carry his bed on the Sabbath day, he merely put the responsibility of the act on his restorer, without suggesting that one who could thus heal must be from God.¹ He brings to our recollection "Mr. Feeblemind" in the allegory of Bunyan.

¹ Cf. John ix. 17, 30, 31.

Hence, when the Jews wished to know who had said to him, "take up thy bed¹ and walk," he did not, apparently, detect their malice, but as soon as he himself had learned the name of his benefactor, went and told it to them.¹ There is, it seems to me, a singular harmony and self-consistency in the bearing of the infirm man throughout this narrative; a harmony so unobtrusive and subtle in its character, and withal so artless in its exhibition, as to prove it undesigned, and the narrative in which it lies truthful.

(8.) The course of Jesus himself was somewhat unusual, yet determined apparently by the same motives which led him to restore the man with a withered hand. For without being known by the impotent man, or solicited to render him aid, and without requiring faith in his own power or person, he interposed to heal him. He may certainly have seen true contrition for sin in the poor man's heart, and so the germ of faith, but he appears to have been moved to effect his recovery, not only by a feeling of compassion, but also by a desire to prepare the way for a public exposition of the true law of the

¹ Verses 12, 15.

Sabbath, and a public vindication of his lordship over the day. This, therefore, like the foregoing, was a miracle of love and of antagonism, an illustration of unsolicited grace to the miserable, and a protest against a scrupulous and heartless legalism, in favor of such gracious action. At any rate, the apostle John has made the following discourse grow out of the miracle in such a way that both must be accepted or rejected together; we do not hesitate to receive them both as true, and stamped with every mark of truth.

(b) The impotent man, according to Paulus, was a wicked beggar. Having suffered some slight injury, he pretended to be a great invalid, scarcely able to move, and by means of this pretence, lived in idleness, and throve on the alms of the diligent. Christ detected the imposture, and said indignantly: "*Wilt thou be made whole?*" meaning by the question: "Thou dost not seem willing to be whole, or thou would'st long since have been so." Through fear, the beggar took up his couch at the command of Christ, and in a spirit of retaliation reported the name of Jesus to his enemies, the Jews.¹

¹ *Leben Jesu*, p. 298, sq.

But all this is pure invention. John says nothing of begging, imposture, or retaliation on the one hand; nothing of indignation, irony, or severity on the other. Indeed, the language of the impotent man, in verse 15, protests against the idea of retaliation; for he does not say that Jesus commanded him to carry his bed on the Sabbath, but that Jesus had made him whole. Had he known the purpose of the Jews, and wished to inflame their hatred against Christ, he would surely have said the former and not the latter. The instinct of revenge does not slumber or deny itself. But the whole hypothesis is unreasonable and unnatural. It flatly contradicts the evangelist.¹

(c) In this narrative, according to Strauss, the writer of the fourth gospel intends to relate a miracle, and a great one too. But this is characteristic of him. His miracles are extra-miraculous. Others report the healing of the blind, but he reports the healing of one born blind; others speak of Christ's raising to life a person just dead, but he knows of Christ's raising one who had lain four days in the grave. This trait excites suspicion,

¹ Verse 5.

and authorizes us to reject his testimony to extraordinary events. The view of Strauss, thus indicated, needs no refutation.

§ IV. *Healing the infirm woman.* Luke xiii. 10-17.

This narrative will not detain us long. The following particulars may be noted: (1.) This cure was wrought on the Sabbath day, and gave rise to remarks by the ruler of the Synagogue and by Jesus himself. (2.) It was wrought publicly, in the presence of many witnesses. (3.) The person healed was doubtless well known to many of these witnesses, and her weakness deemed incurable, for she had been afflicted eighteen years. (4.) The aid of Christ was granted without any formal request or testimony of faith: he called her to him, it is said. (5.) The cure was wrought by the word and touch of Jesus. In casting out demons, the former only appears to have been used. (6.) The cure was apparently esteemed miraculous by the woman herself.¹ (7.) The weakness removed was partly, if not wholly, due to demoniac agency.² (8.) In verse 16, we probably have another illustra-

¹ Verse 14.

² Verses 11, 16.

tion of the idiom by which a principal is said to do what is done by another under his direction.¹ (9.) In verse 12, the perfect, ἀπολέλυσαι, is used as an emphatic present. Meyer says it denotes “the immediate entrance of a permanent state.” A similar use of the perfect will be remembered in Christ’s address to the paralytic: “Thy sins are forgiven thee.”²

The reasons for and the lessons of this miracle may be considered identical with those of the two preceding miracles. Perhaps the element of unsolicited grace is slightly more prominent in this than in those; while the element of antagonism to Jewish error is less marked. The difference, however, is inconsiderable.

It may be added that naturalistic interpreters explain this narrative by assuming that the woman was afflicted with melancholy, and that by dispelling this Jesus effected her restoration to health. Strauss passes over the miracle very lightly, not deeming it, we presume, “a foeman worthy of his steel.” To us it bears every mark of historical truth, and we know of no principles on which its credi-

¹ Compare verse 11. ² Matt. ix. 2; Mark xi. 5; Luke v. 20

bility can be denied, without denying the very existence of Jesus himself.

§ V. *Healing the woman with a bloody flux.*
Matt. ix. 20-22; Mark v. 25-34; Luke viii. 43-48.

On these narratives we remark :

(a) That no points of contradiction appear in them. The account of Matthew is however, as often, noticeably briefer than the accounts of Mark and Luke.

(1.) Matthew testifies that at the time of this miracle the disciples of Jesus were with him; Luke, that “the crowds thronged him” — οἱ ὄχλοι συνέπνιγον αὐτόν — and Mark, that “a great crowd followed him and thronged him” — ὄχλος πλῆθς, καὶ συνέθλιβον αὐτόν. Luke uses a plural noun, but Mark adds an adjective to the singular, increasing its force and making it equivalent to the plural. The verbs which they employ are different, but clearly synonymous. They omit to say here that the disciples were with Jesus, but one of them refers, later and incidentally, to “his disciples,” and the other to “Peter and those about him,” as being present.

(2.) Matthew describes the sufferer as “a

woman having an issue of blood twelve years ;” Luke says the same, and adds that “she had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any ;”¹ and Mark says the same as Luke, adding, that “she had suffered many things of many physicians, was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,” and “had heard of Jesus.” No testimony could be better than this, independent, yet harmonious.

(3.) Luke testifies that “she came to” Jesus “behind and touched the hem of his garment ;” Matthew says the same, adding her reason for so doing, viz : “because she was saying in herself, if I only touch his garment, I shall be saved ;” while Mark says the same as Luke, but adds, that her approach was “in the crowd,” and that “she was saying, if I but touch his clothes, I shall be saved.” Here again there is no contradiction ; the testimony is faultless.

(4.) Matthew testifies that “the woman was saved from that hour ;” Luke, that “immediately her issue of blood ceased ;” and Mark,

¹ Strauss thinks Luke rather severe on those of his own profession. We presume he had little thought of professional honor when writing the history of Christ’s mighty works.

that "straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she knew in the body that she was healed from the plague."

(5.) Matthew testifies that Jesus now turned about, saw the woman, and said: "Be of good courage, daughter; thy faith hath saved thee." Luke omits the fact of Christ's turning round, but records a number of interesting particulars not given by Matthew, namely, that Jesus said: "Who touched me?" that those about him denied doing this, that Peter and those with him responded: "Master, the crowds press and throng thee, and sayest thou, who touched me?" that Jesus replied: "Some one touched me; for I knew power going out from me;" that the woman, when "she saw she was not hidden, came trembling and fell down before him, declaring to him before all the people for what cause she touched him, and how she was healed instantly," and that he said to her: "Be of good courage, daughter, thy faith hath saved thee, go into¹ peace." Finally, Mark testifies that "Jesus knew in himself the power that went forth from him; that having turned round in the crowd, he said: 'Who touched my gar-

¹ εἰς, i. e. into a state of peace.

ments?" that his disciples said to him: "Thou seest the crowd thronging thee, and sayest thou, 'Who touched me?'" that "he looked about to see the one who did this;" that the woman "with fear and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him and told him the whole truth;" and that he said to her: "Daughter, thy faith hath saved thee, go in¹ peace, and be whole of thy plague." Here again, there is not the slightest contradiction; Mark and Luke fill out the picture, but in perfect harmony with the sketch of Matthew.

.(b) The points of agreement are essential. All the witnesses agree in testifying, (1.) that the cure was wrought by our Saviour on his way to the house of Jairus; (2.) that the disease removed was an issue of blood; (3.) that the woman healed had been afflicted by this disease twelve years; (4.) that she approached Jesus from behind; (5.) that she touched some part of his garment; (6.) that she was instantly healed; (7.) that Jesus looked for and saw her; (8.) that he addressed her by the title, daughter; (9.) that he pronounced her cure a result of her faith.

¹ εἰς, as above in Luke.

These are certainly principal points. All the other particulars given by the several records are in perfect keeping with these. The additional details furnished by either Mark or Luke, or by the testimony of both, so readily adjust themselves to these leading facts as to confirm rather than shake or even modify them. The harmony in diversity is complete and convincing. Besides furnishing another instance of the Saviour's knowledge and compassion, the narrative of this miracle shows it to be his will that secret faith be avowed. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." "With the heart, man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Nature may shrink back and wish to spare itself the shame of acknowledging its moral pollution, but this weakness must be conquered, and the tide of love and thankfulness be permitted to flow out, full and free, to the glory of Divine grace. A genuine faith, though untaught, unspoken, and perhaps slightly superstitious, may receive the first blessing; but then it must be spoken and taught and tested. It cannot remain under the soil,

but must shoot up into the face of the sky, and live in the light of day. Says Mr. Westcott: "That touch of him, whom nothing could defile, had done what the waste of all her substance could not do. Her whole wish was fulfilled; but now his eye was following her, and she could not be hid. The silent denial was of no avail, and with fear and trembling she 'told all the truth,' not to Jesus only, but before all the people. The secret source of her impurity was at last laid open, as well as its accomplished cure. The work of faith was thus completed by confession; and the poor prostrate woman was called Christ's daughter, and gladdened with the fulness of that peculiar blessing pronounced elsewhere only upon the penitent in the house of Simon: 'Go in peace; thy faith hath saved thee.'"

(c) The naturalistic interpretation of these narratives is wholly indefensible. Paulus maintains that "owing to her faith in the virtue of contact with Christ, the sick woman felt a change pass through her body when she touched his garment, and from that *inferred* her restoration to be certain. She now drew back into the crowd, but Jesus suddenly

inquired who had seized him by the garment. From this question, it was *inferred* (Mark) that he had felt a healing power going from him. Luke copied the report. "But who now can credit so absurd an opinion? What but a walking source of some unknown health-bringing effluvia would a man be, whose clothing exhaled *involuntary* sanative powers? A student of history may be allowed to say, that *not everything is a fact which is honestly related*. Jesus himself ascribed the woman's sense of health to its true and natural cause, her *trust*." Well may even Strauss reject such an exposition as this! Well may he say that if the evangelists have put an inference of their own into the lips of Jesus, we have no security for the historical truth of the narrative as a whole, and no reason to trouble ourselves with the search for any natural explanation of the event.

(*d*) The mythical interpretation is no more defensible than the naturalistic. In a positive way Strauss has nothing to urge. Negatively, he attempts to show the greater simplicity of Matthew's account, and to refer the additional particulars given by Mark and Luke to a desire to magnify the miracle. This

growth of the story he declares to be indicative of its legendary character. But especially does he urge, with Paulus, against the reality of a miracle in this case, the physical, involuntary, magical, mode of cure. According to the report of the evangelists, he says, contact with the body of Jesus took the place of an act of his will.

But the evangelists make no such declaration, nor does their language, in our opinion, involve any such view. By the words of Christ we are taught that *power* went from him to heal the woman, that he knew the power as it went from him, and that her faith was at least the occasion of its action. Do not these facts indicate a voluntary agency of Jesus? A communication of healing power in answer to a virtual prayer for help?

But Christ, it is further said, inquired: "Who touched me?" He was therefore without any direct knowledge of her faith, as he was of her person. Her recovery, according to the evangelists, was the result of a power streaming forth involuntarily from his body, and from this *result* he *inferred* the genuineness of her faith.

But all this rests upon the hypothesis that Christ put the question, "Who touched me?" for the sake of gaining information himself, and not for the sake of leading the woman to bear witness of his power, and of correcting her crude belief in the virtue of physical contact with him. No valid objection can be made to this latter view. It supposes no deception on the part of Christ.¹ To us, therefore, the remark of Neander, that "the narrative does not decide whether the approach of the woman was known to Christ, and he healed her intentionally, or whether the cure was a divine operation, independently of him," is gratuitous and incorrect. The tone and look of Jesus convinced the woman that she was known to him,² and his words to the disciples indicate the conscious and voluntary putting forth of his divine energy.

§ VI. *Healing a leper.* Matt. viii. 1-4; Mark i. 40-45; Luke v. 12-16.

(a) These narratives are in no respect contradictory. Even Strauss admits the possi-

¹ See Gen. iii. 9; 2 Kings v. 25, 26; Luke xxiv. 28; Mark vi. 48.

² Luke viii. 47.

bility of reconciling their various statements, and confesses the weakness of any argument drawn from this source against their historical truth. But he overlooks the notes of independence in the several accounts and the additional value which this gives to their agreeing testimony. A number of particulars are mentioned by Mark and Luke which are not related by Matthew, but they are entirely consistent with everything said by him. Yet there is no trace of design in this harmony — no indication that either of the writers had in mind the testimony of others, and aimed to make his own agree with theirs. Indeed, the apparent difference of chronological order establishes the impossibility of such an aim.

(*b*) These narratives confirm one another in all essential points. For they agree in testifying, (1.) that the person healed was a leper; (2.) that he prostrated himself before Jesus; (3.) that he did this prior to his being healed; (4.) that he expressed his assurance of Christ's power to heal his disease; (5.) that he mentioned the proximate condition of its exercise, — Christ's pleasure; (6.) that he did so by saying, "If thou wilt, thou canst cleanse me;" (7.) that Jesus stretched forth his hand

and touched him, (8.) saying: "I will, be thou cleansed," (9.) and immediately his leprosy was removed; (10.) that Jesus forbade him to make known, for the time being, the story of his cure; (11.) but directed him to go and show himself to the priest, (12.) and to offer what Moses had commanded for this kind of purification, (13.) that it might be a testimony to them (or against them).

Leprosy appears to have been singled out by divine wisdom as an emblem of moral evil. Loathsome, incurable, deadly, it fitly represented the character and working of sin, and under the Jewish economy was made the visible symbol of that awful malady. "Seeing then that leprosy was this outward and visible sign of the innermost spiritual corruption, this sacrament of death, there could be no fitter form of evil over which the Lord of Life should display his power. He will prove himself the conqueror of death in life, as of death completed. This victory of his over this most terrible form of physical evil, is fitly brought out as a testimony of his Messiahship: 'The lepers are cleansed.' (Matt. xi. 5.)"

(c) The naturalistic interpretation is unten-

able. The leper mentioned in these passages is supposed by Paulus to have asked Jesus to examine him and pronounce him clean, believing that his decision would be equivalent to that of a priest. As Christ extended his hand and applied it to the body of the leper to ascertain his condition, he said, "I will;" and then, after a pause, during which the examination was made, he added: "be thou clean." To avoid exposure to an infectious disease, Jesus stood as far as possible from the leper, "stretching forth his hand" to make the needed examination! Moreover, Luke's expression, "full of leprosy," indicates just that crisis of the disease when it often passes away.¹

In reply to this the words of Strauss may be given with some abridgment. "That the leper was just in the crisis of recovery is an assertion foreign to the text, which in the first two evangelists speaks of leprosy without any qualifying term, while the *πλήρης λέπρας* of the third must be equivalent to the words, "leprous as snow," in Exod. iv. 6; Numb. xii. 10; 2 Kings v. 27, an expression which, in every instance, according to the context, signifies

¹ I. p. 794, sq.

the highest grade of leprosy. The word καθαρίζειν may signify, without doubt, "to pronounce clean;" but that Matthew, after relating that Jesus had said, "Thou art (declared) clean," should have added, "and immediately he was (declared) clean," is a tautology so flat, that here, and therefore in the whole section, καθαρίζεσθαι must be taken in the sense of being actually *made* clean. So likewise in Matthew xi. 5, and x. 8, the same verb is not capable of the interpretation to pronounce clean. But the naturalistic view of these anecdotes fails most decidedly in separating by an interval of time the clauses, "I will," and, "be thou clean." If the supposed sense were the original one, at least one of the evangelists would have said, "Jesus answered: 'I will,' and having touched him, said, 'Be thou (declared) clean,'" instead of saying, "Jesus touched him, saying: 'I will, be thou clean.'" ¹

(d) The mythical interpretation is also unsatisfactory. Strauss says that "the instant removal of such a malady as the evangelists here describe, by a word and touch, is so unthinkable, as to remind every unprejudiced critic of the realm of fable." To that realm

¹ II. p. 72, sq.

he proceeds to refer the events recorded in Exodus iv. 6, 7; Numbers xii. 10, *sq.*, and 2 Kings v. *passim*, and believes that these Old Testament fables gave rise to the myth before us.¹

A reply to this view is needless; for it rests confessedly on the assumption that miracles are impossible, and not on any imperfection in the testimony for this particular event.

§ VII. *Healing ten lepers.* Luke xvii. 11–19.

(a) This record is eminently graphic and trustworthy. The particulars stand out, as it were, upon canvas, distinct, peculiar, consistent, natural. The locality, between Samaria and Galilee, near a village; the sufferers, nine Jews and one Samaritan, but the latter willing to report himself to Jewish priests; the disease, leprosy, and the victims standing afar off and crying out for aid; the singular command of Jesus, suggesting, but not promising relief; their unanimous obedience to this command; their sudden recovery while in the act of obeying; the turning back of the

¹ II. p. 76.

Samaritan, and the probable going on of the Jews, — the latter obeying the letter of Christ's command, and perhaps of their law, while the former gave heed to the dictates of a renewed heart, in rendering thanks and praise to the Messiah before reporting himself to the priests; and the language of Jesus, in view of their respective courses, implying the selfishness and ingratitude of the Jews, but the piety and thankfulness of the Samaritan, — the former, as it appears, being only solicitous to regain their health and position in society, but the latter anxious also to honor his benefactor; — all these are striking facts, psychologically natural, and easy to remember, yet at the same time peculiar and difficult to invent. The more closely one examines these various items in the narrative the firmer will be his confidence in its historical truth.

“Ten cleansed, and only one remain!
Who would have thought our nature's stain
Was dyed so foul, so deep in grain?
Even he who reads the heart, —
Knows what he gave and what we lost,
Sin's forfeit, and redemption's cost, —
By a short pang of wonder cross'd
Seems at the sight to start.”¹

¹ Keble.

(b) Paulus, referring to the lepers, says: "Jesus encourages them to go to the priests. *The history says nothing more!* No one answers that he has already done so. Hence no one was afflicted with a leprosy already pronounced incurable. On the contrary, when they go to the priests, it comes to pass that they are all pronounced clean, *i. e.* free from infectious leprosy, demanding their exclusion from society. . . . The Samaritan, who went, not to Jerusalem, but to Gerizim, now returned and testified his gratitude to Christ and to God." ¹

To this explanation great objections may be raised. Luke mentions distinctly that while they were going — ἐν τῷ ὑπάγειν αὐτοῦς — the lepers "were cleansed." Were they merely pronounced clean by somebody on the way? Besides, the return of the Samaritan, his glorifying God with a loud voice, and his falling down before the feet of Jesus and giving him thanks, were, on this hypothesis, surprising and extravagant, rather than the neglect of the Jews to do so ungrateful and irreligious. Finally, it is unreasonable to suppose that there were ten lepers in this place, cast

¹ II. p. 837.

out of society by their own mistake or that of their friends, no one of whom had taken the proper measures to ascertain the character of his malady. Leprosy was so well known in Palestine as to render such mistakes wellnigh incredible. But argument is superfluous. To read the narrative of Luke with a fair mind is to be convinced of his intention to record a miracle.

(*c*) Strauss supposes that the narrative of Luke may have been woven out of the story of cures of leprosy wrought by Jesus, and out of certain parables in which he had made Samaritans, though hated and despised by the Jews, examples of compassion and the like. It is therefore half mythical and half parabolical.

Any reply to such a view must be needless; but it may be well to notice a more frequent criticism on the narratives before us. "It has been thought unaccountable," says Rothe, "that so many real lepers were in the communities where Jesus taught. But the meaning of the evangelists is clear; nor is it reasonable to suppose them mistaken on this point. Had all lepers been excluded from society at that time, it is incredible

that they should have been ignorant of the fact and should have burdened their narratives with accounts so absurd. Leprosy was a common disease among the Jews, and the law of expulsion from society was not at once and rigidly enforced.”¹ “As a rule,” remarks Winer,² “lepers dwelt by themselves outside of the cities.”³ Yet they were not confined to one spot. In the gospels we find lepers going about,⁴ as they do now in Arabia,⁵ but shunning an approach to other persons.⁶ They were not wholly excluded from the synagogues even.” The exclusion of lepers from society appears to have been a religious, not a sanitary regulation. None but Jews were subject to it.⁷ It may be

¹ From unpublished *Lectures on the Life of Christ*.

² R. W. B. I. 117.

³ Lev. xiii. 46; cf. Nu. v. 2, sq.; xii. 10, 14, sq.; 2 Kings vii. 3; xv. 5; Josephus, Apion, i. 31; Antiq. iii. 11, 3; Bel. Jud. v. 5, 6.

⁴ Matt. viii. 2; Luke v. 12; xvii. 12.

⁵ Niebuhr, Besch. 136.

⁶ Luke xvii. 12.

⁷ See 2 Kings v. 1; viii. 5; *Kitto's Cyclopædia*, article “Leprosy,” and Winer, as cited above. “How, moreover,” says Trench, “should the Levitical priests, had the disease been this creeping infection, have themselves escaped the disease, obliged as they were by their very office to submit the leper to such *actual handling* and closest examination?” (p. 175.) We do not know on what authority it is said that Jewish priests were re-

added, that though a leper did sometimes recover from the disease, it was altogether "incurable by the art and skill of man."¹

quired actually to handle the lepers. According to Lev. xiii. 1, sq., they were to look at the lepers very carefully, but not, so far as appears, to touch them.

¹ Cf. 2 Kings v. 7.

CHAPTER III.

THE CURING OF ORGANIC DEFECTS.

§ I. *Curing two blind men.* , Matt. ix. 27-31.

THE exact time and place of this miracle are not surely known; but the language of Matthew seems to favor the opinion that it was wrought very soon after the raising of Jairus's daughter; probably on the same day, and in Capernaum. The principal facts are these: Two blind men followed Jesus on his return to "the house." While doing this, they besought him loudly to restore their sight. In their prayer for this mercy, they addressed him as the Son of David. They came up with him as he was entering the house; and he then said to them: "Believe ye that I am able to do this," namely, to restore your sight? They replied at once in the affirmative. He thereupon touched their eyes, and said at the same time, "be it unto you according to your faith"; and instantly their eyes were opened and they saw. Jesus then strictly forbade them to

make known their sudden cure; but they went forth, and, disobeying his will, noised him abroad in all that land. All these particulars are put down in the simplest and most natural manner conceivable, with no trace of invention or exaggeration.

If leprosy symbolizes one characteristic of sin, blindness signifies another; if the former reminds us of a corrupted heart, the latter points to a darkened conscience. As a rule, they are alike beyond the reach of human skill. Westcott remarks that "healing the blind is exclusively a miracle of the gospels. There is, as far as I remember, no trace of such cases in the Old Testament or in the apostolic labors."¹ It is also noticeable that Jesus makes the faith of these blind men the measure of the blessing granted to them: "According to your faith be it unto you." The suppliants persisted in their request, following Jesus into the house, and thus proving the efficacy of importunate prayer.

According to the naturalistic hypothesis, Jesus was a skilful oculist; and when the blind men, or partially blind, had pledged themselves to abide his treatment, he applied

¹ *Characteristics*, p. 49.

with his hand a powerful water to their eyes, and very soon effected a cure.

Strauss pertinently objects to this explanation that "it has not the least root in the text"; indeed, it does the greatest violence to the language of the evangelist. The same, too, may be said with equal truth of his own explanation; "it has not the least root in the text." Both have their root in a disbelief of miracles, and both trample in the dust every sound principle of interpretation and just rule of evidence.

§ II. *Healing a blind man at Bethsaida.* Mark viii. 22-26.

This miracle is peculiar to Mark, and the following particulars lie on the face of his narrative: When applied to for aid, Jesus was entering into Bethsaida; the person to be cured was a blind man, and this blind man was brought to Jesus by others. They also presented his request for sight, specifying the way in which, as they supposed, the cure would be wrought. Jesus, taking the blind man's hand, led him out of the village. He then spit in his eyes, put his hands upon them, and asked him if he saw anything.

Having looked up, the blind man replied: 'I see men as trees walking,' *i. e.* I see them indistinctly. Jesus again put his hands on the eyes of the sufferer, and caused him to look up, when he was restored, and saw everything clearly. Jesus now sent him to his own house in the suburbs, forbidding him to enter the village, or to speak to any one in it.

Thus eighteen distinct but harmonious particulars are specified in this brief record. How perfectly do the statements that Jesus, after restoring the blind man's sight, forbade him to enter the village or speak to any one in it, but sent him directly to his own house, agree with the circumstance that he led him out of the village before restoring his sight! In this instance, as in several others, our Saviour saw fit to exercise his miraculous power in comparative secrecy. No good end was to be reached by displaying it before an excitable crowd.

Yet there is no reason for supposing that this miracle was wrought without witnesses. The immediate disciples of Jesus were doubtless present; for this must be assumed as generally true, when there is no hint of their

absence; and so, too, in all probability, were the friends of the blind man, who led him to Jesus. It was therefore this small company of witnesses, at a little distance perhaps, which caught the eye of the blind man when he said: "I see men as trees walking."

Blindness is still very common in the East, partly on account of the excessive heat and
* dazzling brightness of the sun, partly on account of the practice of sleeping in the open air, and partly on account of the fine sand driven by the wind. It is not therefore surprising that several instances of restoring sight to the blind are mentioned in the gospels.¹ This circumstance, inasmuch as it supposes the frequency of blindness, strengthens the historical credibility of the record. In all matters connected with the miracles of Jesus, the evangelists are true to nature and history; can they be false in their account of the miracles themselves?

But this narrative is regarded with special

¹ See Matt. xi. 4, 5; Luke vii. 28; Matt. xii. 22; Luke xi. 4; Matt. xv. 30; xxi. 14. Predictions of the Messiah, as giving sight to the blind, occur, Is. xxxv. 5; xlii. 7, sq., and perhaps Is. xxix. 18, and Ps. cxlvi. 8.

complacency by Paulus and others of the same school. Two points are strongly urged. (1.) That the cure was mediate, and (2.) that it was gradual.

Both these points we accept as true ; but the record which establishes them forbids us to believe that the medium employed and the time occupied were sufficient to account for this cure as a natural event. "Were a physician," says Dr. Gleig, "instantly to give sight to a blind man, by anointing his eyes with a chemical preparation to the nature and properties of which we were absolute strangers, the cure would to us undoubtedly be *wonderful* ; but we would not pronounce it *miraculous*, because it might be the physical effect of the operation of the unguent upon the eye. But were he to give sight to the patient merely by commanding him to receive it, or by anointing his eyes with spittle, we should, with the utmost confidence, pronounce the cure to be a miracle ; because we know perfectly that neither the human voice, nor human spittle, has, by the established constitution of things, any such power over the diseases of the eye."

Again, the contents and style of this nar-

rative are inconsistent with the mythical hypothesis. A miracle invented to honor the Messiah would scarcely have been located out of the town, in comparative seclusion; nor would it have been described as gradual or mediate, for these peculiarities would be supposed to weaken its effect.

§ III. *Healing a deaf-mute.* Mark vii. 31-37, (cf. Matt. xv. 29-31.)

Mark has recorded the following particulars: Jesus had come from the borders of Tyre to the Sea of Galilee and the region of Decapolis, when a deaf-mute was brought to him, with a petition for healing, which Jesus was expected to accomplish in a particular way, *i. e.* by laying his hand on the sufferer. Our Saviour then led the deaf-mute away from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears, touched his tongue with spittle, looked up into heaven, groaned audibly, and said to him, "Ephphatha, Be opened." Immediately the patient's ears were opened, his tongue set free, and he was speaking correctly. Jesus then charged the man and his friends to tell no one of the miracle, but the stricter the prohibition, the more did

they proclaim the fact. The people were beyond measure astonished, and said: "he hath done all things well," and "he maketh the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." This narrative is remarkably distinct and vivid. It reads like the testimony of an eye-witness, and we are persuaded that Mark has given us the very words of Peter in describing the miracle.

Paulus lays great emphasis on the use of means in the present case. He supposes that Jesus moistened with spittle some kind of powders and applied them to the tongue, if not to the inner part of the ear. But, if medical science, as he professes to believe, was at a very low ebb in Palestine, how did Jesus, who was a mere man, acquire his great skill? How was it that he never failed in his attempts to effect a speedy and perfect cure? Where have lived the successors of this matchless physician? Or did his skill perish with him? If so, was it earth-born or heaven-born, natural or supernatural?

§ IV. *Healing the man who was born blind.*
John ix. 1-41.

To note all the particulars mentioned in

this beautiful narrative would detain us too long; but a few points may be selected.

(1.) *The preliminary conversation.* As Jesus and his disciples were walking in Jerusalem, they saw a beggar who had been blind from his birth. By this sight the disciples were reminded of a dark problem,—the relation of individual suffering to sin,—and turning to Christ they said, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” thus intimating their belief that every signal calamity in this life must be the fruit of uncommon guilt. But Jesus replied, “Neither did this man sin, nor his parents,” that is, in such a way as to be the special cause of this great calamity. It was rather sent upon him in order that “the works of God might be made manifest,” by a restoration of his sight, both bodily and spiritual.

Is not all this perfectly natural? Would not the sight of such a man be likely to bring this very problem to the minds of the disciples? And, with the beggar before them, how could they state the problem and ask of the Master a solution more simply than they did? Every word is true to nature.

(2.) *The miracle itself.* Jesus made clay of spittle and earth, with which he anointed the eyes of the blind man. He then told him to go unto the pool of Siloam and wash. This command was promptly obeyed, and the blind man at once received sight. So the cure was wrought mediately and gradually, but no reason for this is given. The details are simple, exact, naked. That which any man present could know by the evidence of his senses may be found in this record, and nothing more.

(3.) *The reception of the man restored to sight by his neighbors.* They were greatly astonished at his power to see. Some said: "Is not this he that sat and begged?" others said: "It is he;" and others, who could not believe his recovery possible, "He is like him;" but the man himself silenced their doubts by testifying, "I am he." Hence they inquired: "How were thine eyes opened?" and were distinctly informed. Their next question was: "Where is he?" viz. Jesus, who had wrought the miracle; but the man could not tell.

This portion of the narrative is entirely objective and very graphic. The dialogue is natural and to the point. The inveterate blindness of the beggar is taken for granted,

and everything turns on the identity of that beggar and the man before them. Could a myth be so life-like? Could it have been so true to nature as to say, verse 9, "Is not this he that was sitting and begging?" instead of saying, "Is not this he that was blind from birth?"

(4.) *First interview of the man restored to sight with the Pharisees.* Through fear of the Sanhedrim or hatred to Jesus this man was now taken to the Pharisees¹ for examination. When asked by them how his sight had been restored, he replied briefly by recounting the particulars. Some of them, insisting that Jesus had violated the Sabbath, concluded that he was a sinner, and not from God; but others inferred from the miracle wrought that he could not be a sinner. Differing among themselves, they asked the blind man his opinion respecting Jesus; and he replied, "He is a prophet." Evidently the enemies of Christ were not making any progress. Hence they began to deny the miracle itself; they would not admit that the man before them had been blind, or had recovered his sight.

¹ Whether to the collected Sanhedrim, or to a Synagogue Court, or to a body of the Pharisees, is not said.

(5.) *The parents of the blind man questioned.* To settle the point as to his past blindness, his parents were called; and in answer to three questions: "Is this your son?" "Was he born blind?" "How is it that he now sees?" they said: "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees we know not, or who opened his eyes, we know not." Thus far their reply, made in response to a judicial or semi-judicial inquiry, was true and suitable; but "the Jews had already agreed, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue," and a selfish fear prompted the parents to add: "He is of age; ask him; he will speak for himself." This gratuitous remark betrayed their weakness, and doubtless encouraged their inquisitors to hope for success in an attempt to overawe the son also. He was therefore called before them again.

(6.) *Second interview of the recovered man with the Pharisees.* The Pharisees first solemnly adjured him to speak the truth, but at once added: "We know that this man is a sinner," thus indicating their wish to have him deny the miracle. But he was not to be moved.

Head and heart were sound. Avoiding as far as possible the theological question, he replied: "Whether he is a sinner, I know not; one thing I know, that having been blind, now I see." Finding him firm, yet wishing to detect at least some flaw in his testimony, they asked him again: "What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes?" But the man had spirit as well as insight; his courage rose with the increase of danger, and he quickly responded: "I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples?" This brave confession, mixed with just irony, excited their wrath, and they answered, reviling: "Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses's disciples. We know that God spake to Moses; but this (fellow) we know not whence he is." An admirable reply was at hand: "Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one born blind.¹

¹ "To open the eyes of a man born blind, was more than to

If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." The Pharisees were thrown completely off their guard, and, for the sake of taunting him with peculiar sinfulness, recognized, perhaps inadvertently, his congenital blindness: "Thou wast *wholly born in sin*; and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out."

If this account is not true to human nature, we may despair of finding anything in history which is. The bearing of the Pharisees is all of a piece throughout. So is that of the blind man; it is modest, firm, faithful. When therefore he knew that Jesus was the Son of God, we are not surprised to learn that he worshipped him. (Verse 38.)

Paulus urges in support of the naturalistic view, (*a*) that the man was but partially blind, since he was told to go to the pool of Siloam and wash! (*b*) that the operation which Jesus performed on his eyes was very delicate, since he said, "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day!!"

keep a sick man from dying; this were but to uphold and maintain nature from decaying; that were to create a new sense, and to restore a deficiency in nature. To make an eye, was no whit less difficult than to make a man; he that could do the greater might well have done the less." — *Bishop Hall's Contemplations*, p. 557.

etc.; (*c*) that means were used, clay, spittle, and probably some powders of great efficacy! (*d*) that the bathing in Siloam was probably continued several days, so as to have the full benefit of the water-cure!—All this manifestly is *interpreted into* the text, or misinterpreted out of it. Changing but a word, we may say:—

“Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his word in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.”

Strauss refers to Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6, as a passage which probably gave rise to this legend. Its extra-miraculous character is a very strong reason, he thinks, for pronouncing it distinctly a myth. We cannot feel any interest in overturning such a man of straw. Let it stand. The narrative of John will not suffer by it.

§ V. *Curing two blind men at Jericho.* Matt. xx. 29–34; Mark x. 46–52; Luke xviii. 35–43.

On the narratives of this miracle we remark:

(*a*) That their seeming contradictions may be hypothetically set aside. Though it is impossible for us to lay down with confidence the precise series of events which *did* actually occasion and justify these divergent accounts,

it will not be impossible for us to show that such or such a series *may* have done this; and hence it is needless to assume any contradiction between the records; for the *supposed* series of events may have been the *actual* one. Indeed, the integrity and competency of witnesses are sometimes so great as to authorize a full belief of their testimony, although we are unable to unite its various parts, even by hypothesis, in one consistent whole. A single fact not specified may be the tie which is needed to bind together all these parts in perfect harmony. In the present instance we notice:—

(1.) A difference as to the number of persons healed. Matthew speaks of two, Mark and Luke of one. Obviously, however, the smaller number does not exclude the larger. One of the men was perhaps so prominent at the time, or so well known afterwards, that the miracle was naturally associated with him, the subordinate character being generally forgotten or unnoted. Says Calvin: *De uno vero tantum loquuti sunt Marcus et Lucus, vel quia erat notior, vel quia in illo non minus insigne virtutis Christi specimen erat quam in duobus. Certe propter celebrem notitiam videtur eum prætulisse*

Marcus, qui tam ipsius quam patris nomen exprimit.

(2.) A difference as to the place of the miracle. This is a more perplexing difficulty. Matthew and Mark speak of Christ as performing the cure when he was *going out* of the city; but Luke connects his account of it with a notice of Christ's *drawing near* to the city. On this point Calvin remarks: "I conjecture that when Christ was approaching the city the blind man cried out; but as he was not heard, by reason of the noise, he seated himself by the way which led out of the city, and was there at length heard by Jesus." Ellicott favors this hypothesis, with a slight modification, viz: "that the one who is mentioned at our Lord's entry into Jericho as having learnt from the crowd who it was that was coming into the city, was not healed *then*, but in company with another sufferer, when our Lord was leaving the city." Dr. Hackett suggests that it is not inconsistent with the sacred narrative to suppose that the blind man made his first appeal to the Saviour as the latter entered the city, but for some reason was not at first answered. Jesus remained in the city until the next morning. The

blind man, therefore, stationed himself at the gate through which the Saviour was to pass on leaving the city, and renewed his application to him. All difficulty is removed, if in Luke xviii. 38, we suppose the words, *on the morrow*, to be understood — “And [on the morrow] he cried,” etc. So many events are passed over by the evangelists that such ellipses must often be supplied. Maldonatus, Bengel, and Trench adopt substantially the same view of the order of events, and we cannot but regard it as on the whole satisfactory.

It has also been suggested, though with less probability, “that Jesus remained some days at least in Jericho, where he would naturally visit points of interest in the vicinity; as, for example, the fountain of Elisha, a mile or more distant. The miracle therefore may have been wrought, not when he was *finally* leaving Jericho for Jerusalem, but when he was *occasionally* going out of and returning to Jericho.”¹

Others still have urged that the verb ἐγγίξεν, employed by Luke, may signify *to be near*, (see Septuag. 1 Kings xxi. 2; Deut. xxi. 3; Jer. xxiii.

¹ Robinson's *Harmony*, p. 206.

23; Ruth ii. 20; 2 Sam. xix. 42.) Dr. Robin-
son appears to favor this method of harmo-
nizing the accounts; yet we cannot think it so
probable as the one first named.

The remaining differences are such as prove
the independence of the several narratives,
without giving any trouble to the harmonist.

(*b*) Their points of agreement are essential.
For they unite in affirming, (1.) that the mir-
acle was wrought at Jericho; (2.) that it con-
sisted in a removal of blindness; (3.) that the
persons cured, (assuming that there were two,)
were sitting by the wayside as Jesus passed
by; (4.) that a large number of people accom-
panied Jesus; (5.) that the blind men heard
from this crowd that the Saviour was passing;
(6.) that they cried aloud to him for mercy;
(7.) that in doing this they called him "the
Son of David"; (8.) that they were rebuked
by some of the crowd for thus crying out;
(9.) that this rebuke led them to cry yet
more earnestly, repeating the same words;
(10.) that Jesus hearing them stood still in
the way, and (11.) called them to himself;
(12.) that when they were come to him Jesus
inquired what they wished him to do, and
(13.) they replied by asking for a restoration

of their sight; (14.) that he gave them on the spot what they desired, and (15.) that they at once followed him.

In so many distinct and leading features do all the narratives agree; yet with the exception of a few brief sentences, very striking and easy to remember, they exhibit differences of style so marked as to prove their independence of one another. Each one of them must therefore be regarded as bearing witness to all the facts just enumerated; and their united testimony is a "threefold cord not easily broken." And be it observed, that they describe events of the natural world, not of the spiritual; what could be seen or heard, and not objects super-sensual or imaginary.

We forbear describing the efforts of Paulus and Strauss to escape the force of this testimony; for here as elsewhere their arguments may be resolved into bold assumption and shallow criticism: the former, Paulus, closing his eyes firmly against the plain sense of the text; and the latter, Strauss, no less firmly against the whole spirit and style of the gospels.

* CHAPTER IV.

THE HEALING OF DEMONIACS.

APART from the Bible we are aware of no evidence sufficient to justify us in affirming the reality of demoniacal possessions. But the gospels appear to furnish this evidence. And, according to their *prima facie* import, demoniacs were in some way distinguishable from persons simply afflicted with bodily or mental disease. But they nowhere formally describe the symptoms or effects of spiritual possession. If these effects are mentioned at all, it is but incidentally and briefly, so that we are unable to determine whether they were in all respects evident to sense and reliable, or not.

Moreover, aside from inspiration, which we do not wish here to assume as a basis of argument, although we may properly appeal to it as an explanation of certain features of the gospel history, the evangelists were credible witnesses of sensible phenomena, as the words and conduct of Jesus and the demoniacs; but of nothing more. Hence our belief in the re-

ality of demoniacal possessions rests on the words of Christ recorded by the evangelists, on the words of the demoniacs, and on a few singular and otherwise inexplicable circumstances. Of these sources of evidence the words of Jesus are plainly the most important; and therefore our belief in the actual expulsion of demons by Christ depends upon our belief of his infallibility, and not the reverse. The act is deemed a miracle on the testimony of the agent, rather than the agent deemed divine because of the act.

If, however, as may be inferred from a variety of considerations, there were evident symptoms of possession known to the Jews in the time of Christ, the expulsion of demons by him may have been to them an infallible sign of his miraculous power. And when, according to the evangelical record, an instantaneous cure of bodily or mental disorder accompanied the expulsion of demons, this cure is for us a true miracle, attesting the divine mission of Christ, though the expulsion must be received chiefly on his testimony.

But against the doctrine that demons or evil spirits did, in some instances, take possession of the bodies of men, several objections

have been strenuously urged. It will be easier to dispose of these objections after looking at the particular instances mentioned in the gospels. At present, we will merely state the general position of those who reject the doctrine of demoniacal possessions.

“I do freely allow,” says Farmer, “that both our Saviour and his apostles made use of the common popular language of the age and country in which they lived, on the subject before us; and that this language was originally founded on the supposition of the reality of demoniacal possessions.”¹ “To remove from these divine instructors of mankind every shadow of blame,* we must remember, further, that words which seem to express a cause, and might at first express it, come in time to signify nothing but an effect, without containing any idea of the cause by which it was produced.”² “Why might not they affirm that some persons were *possessed* in a sense similar to that in which they affirmed others to be *bewitched*? Though they did not believe the existence and influence of Mammon, the reputed god of wealth, yet they scruple not to

¹ *On the Demoniacs of the New Testament*, p. 187.

² *Id.* p. 205, sq.

call wealth by his name; and they might therefore with equal propriety use demons for those dire diseases of which they were the *reputed* authors.”¹

Mr. Farmer also maintains that none but “maniacs or epileptics,” in other words, persons “discomposed in their mind,” are called demoniacs in the New Testament, and he seems to suppose that such persons generally imagined themselves to be possessed by demons. Referring to one of this class, he remarks: “The language of Christ was adapted to his apprehensions and the disturbed state of his mind. And if Christ saw fit to speak to him at all in that state, was it not proper to speak according to his conceptions and in the manner most likely to be attended with success?”²

It will be observed that Mr. Farmer makes use of two hypotheses: one, that the term demoniac had lost a part, and the chief part, of its original meaning in the time of Christ, so that it signified a disorder without suggesting its cause; and another, that it was applied to those who believed themselves to be afflicted by evil spirits, thus retaining, at least

¹ *On the Demoniacs of the New Testament*, p. 201.

² *Id.* p. 152.

for the popular mind, its original meaning unabridged. These contradictory hypotheses should be borne in mind as we proceed to examine the miracles of our present section.

§ I. *Healing a demoniac in the synagogue of Capernaum.* Mark i. 21-28; Luke iv. 31-37.

On these narratives we remark:—

(a) That they offer no points of contradiction. As usual, a large number of minute differences may be discovered in them, but not one discord. They will be found to agree precisely in but two sentences, namely, the words of the demoniac to Jesus, and the account of his response; and just these sentences, if any, provided the miracle was wrought, might naturally be identical; for they give the striking, salient points of the transaction. Hence they were likely to attract attention and easy to recall, so that their identity does not prove dependence while the diversity on all subordinate points does evince independence. The two narratives may therefore be cross-questioned and combined, as the testimony of two original witnesses.

(b) That they offer many points of substantial agreement. They agree, *e. g.* (1.) As

to the town where the miracle was wrought, Capernaum; and (2.) the place in town where it was performed, the synagogue; (3.) as to the day on which it was done, a Sabbath; and (4.) the previous employment of Christ in the synagogue, namely, teaching; (5.) as to the effect of his teaching on the people, astonishment; and (6.) the cause of that effect, the authority with which he taught; (7.) as to the presence of a demoniac in the synagogue; and (8.) the epithet applied to the evil spirit in whose power the demoniac was, to wit, unclean; (9.) as to the crying out of the demoniac to Jesus; and (10.) the peculiar language of that cry, showing that it was originated by the evil spirit; (11.) as to the fact that Jesus rebuked the evil spirit; and (12.) the language which he used, recognizing the personality of the demon; (13.) as to the obedience of the unclean spirit in coming out of the man; and (14.) his malignant violence to the man as he came out of him; (15.) as to the amazement of the people at the miracle; and (16.) their questioning one with another in respect to it; (17.) as to their reference in this conversation to the teaching of Christ as well as to his authority over unclean spirits;

and (18.) the going forth of a report concerning him into all the surrounding region. In any one of these eighteen particulars the two records might have been contradictory, and it is hardly too much to say that in one or more points they *would* have been so, had they been invented.

(c) That they bear witness of a real possession. According to the obvious sense of the text, the demoniac's body was in the power of an evil spirit. This may be inferred from his language addressed to Christ, asking to be let alone, saying that Jesus could have nothing in common with them, calling him by way of eminence the Holy One of God, and expressing a fear that he was about to destroy them. These expressions show that an evil spirit spoke with the demoniac's lips; or if not, that the sufferer imagined this to be so and himself unwittingly personated a demon. The use of the plural pronoun — ἡμεῖς — points, we think, to an evil spirit in fellowship with Satan and his angels. So too does the knowledge which this language displays in respect to Jesus favor the idea of a real possession.

Farmer conjectures that demoniacs, "in their

intervals of sanity, heard of the fame of Jesus as the expected Messiah and ran into the common opinion of him more eagerly than persons of a cooler judgment.”¹ “Every one,” he says, “knows that madmen are often distinguished for the quickness and acuteness of their natural parts. Their lucid intervals sometimes last for a considerable time; and, in some cases, a single moment makes a vast alteration. Even under their disorder, they sometimes say things surprisingly just.”² He also suggests that “infernal spirits could have no great zeal to assert the honor of their enemy and avenger;” that they “were much more likely to speak falsehood than truth;” and that if the conduct of demoniacs is ascribed to their agency, they acted out of character and were as mad as the demoniacs themselves could be.”

These remarks are ingenious and forcible, but not convincing. A maniac might doubtless have been impressed with the moral dignity and authority of Christ as he taught in the synagogue, and, conceiving himself to be the organ of an evil spirit, might have ad-

¹ *On the Demoniacs of the New Testament*, pp. 146, 147.

² *Id.* p. 159.

dressed him as the Holy One of God ; but the completeness of the delusion and the exactness of the personification, as evinced by the pronoun "us," excite surprise. So likewise does the last clause, which betrays a suspicion that Jesus had come to execute judgment on spiritual foes. By what means should the madman discover so early the moral and spiritual nature of the Messiah's work and kingdom? The remark that "infernal spirits" would not be likely to speak the truth in such a case is unfounded. Satan and his angels do not scruple to make use of truth whenever it promises to serve their ends. The demon may perhaps have wished to prejudice the cause of Jesus by bearing testimony in his favor. Moreover, as malice and fear often coexist in the same spirit, he may have done this when so perturbed that his testimony, even against his will, was favorable to Christ. The craft of the wicked is folly ; their attempts to defeat the purpose of God are constantly foiled and made subservient to that purpose.

Again, the words of Christ to the demoniac suppose a real possession. The command of silence, when compared with other instances of the same kind, suggests the idea of some

peculiar reason why Christ repelled the testimony of demoniacs. If there was such a reason, according to Mr. Farmer, "it probably was the desire of leaving no room for the specious pretence, that there was a secret agreement between him and those evil spirits, who were judged to be so eager in applauding him."¹ Very well; but if it was wise for Christ to provide against any plausible ground for such a pretence, it was natural for wicked spirits to attempt furnishing this ground, and so they were acting altogether in character, if they testified the truth respecting him.

Further, the words of Christ enjoining silence and his command to come out of the man, are manifestly addressed to the same being or disease, and this object is clearly distinguished from the man himself.

Finally, the description of the demon's exit implies a real possession. Mark says, that "the unclean spirit, tearing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him;" and Luke says, that "the demon throwing him in the midst came out from him, doing him no harm."

On the whole, these narratives prove that

¹ *On the Demoniacs of the New Testament*, p. 153, sq.

the term demoniac was not used in the time of Christ to denote a person afflicted with madness or epilepsy, without any reference to the cause of his disorder. It was used rather to signify a person whose body was occupied by an evil spirit, subjected to its malign influence, and made the organ of its will. We must therefore conclude that Jesus accepted the view thus expressed as correct, or else accommodated his language to a known error.

As the naturalistic and mythical interpretations of the text offer nothing new or useful, we pass them by unexamined.

§ II. *Healing a blind and dumb demoniac.* Matt. xii. 22-37; Luke xi. 14-23; (cf. Mark iii. 19-30.)

On these accounts we remark:—

(a) That they differ without disagreement. Matthew indeed seems to place the miracle earlier in our Lord's ministry than Luke, but neither of them fixes the date with any precision. The language of Luke is particularly indefinite on this point; almost equally so is that of Mark, who only gives the sequel of the miracle and not the miracle itself; so that there is no basis for a charge of chronologi-

cal discrepancy. Again, Matthew says that "the demoniac was blind and dumb," while Luke merely says that the "demon was dumb." But if the demon had possession of the man's organs of speech and did not use them, they were not used, and the demoniac was also dumb. Moreover, merely by saying that the demon, and so the demoniac, was dumb, he does not of course deny his blindness, asserted by Matthew. Similar remarks are applicable to all the other differences. They prove the independence of the separate accounts, and so justify us in appealing to them as distinct witnesses, corroborating one another's testimony.

(b) That they bear witness in common to the essential facts. Matthew and Luke, who relate the miracle itself, unite in saying, (1.) that the person cured was a demoniac; (2.) that he was dumb; (3.) that Jesus cast out the demon (Matthew, by implication, see verse 24); (4.) that the dumb spake (evidently on the spot); (5.) that the crowds were astonished. And all three evangelists testify (6.) that the enemies of Jesus then present admitted the fact of the demon's expulsion; (7.) but accused Christ of effecting it by the aid of Beelzebul, (8.) whom they call

the prince of the demons; (9.) that Jesus refuted their charge at length, (10.) by saying that every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate; (11.) that by casting out demons, his subjects, Satan would be divided against himself, and his kingdom fall; (12.) and that his own power thus to wrest from "the strong one" his victims, was a proof of his superiority and triumph over Satan; while two of them add, that his reply also affirmed, (13.) that to charge him with the crime of a compact with Beelzebul was by parity of reasoning to charge their sons, who professed to exorcise demons, with the same crime; (14.) that blasphemy against the Son of Man might be forgiven, (15.) while blasphemy against the Holy Spirit would never be forgiven.

(c) That they suppose a real possession. — This is true of the first words of Luke: "He was casting out a demon, and it was dumb." The general simplicity of the gospel narrative ill accords with calling madness or melancholy a demon, and still less with saying that this demon was dumb. Least of all should we expect such metaphorical language from the pen of Luke in describing a disease.

It is also true of the words of the enemies

of Jesus. The form of their accusation: "He casteth out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons," evinces their belief in actual possessions and in the expulsion of evil spirits by Christ. To have said: "He casteth out diseases by the prince of diseases," would have been wellnigh senseless.

It is likewise true of the words of Christ. He distinctly repels the charge of casting out demons in and by their chief, showing the idea to be absurd, but no less distinctly claims to cast them out in and by fellowship with the Spirit of God. He then reminds his accusers that the fact of his taking any persons out of the kingdom and power of Satan, is in reality a proof of his having Satan himself in his power,—thus proclaiming himself to be, not the ally and tool, but the foe and conqueror of the prince of demons. It is quite impossible for us to conceive of Christ using such language in accommodation to the mistaken views of his foes. Hence we look upon the text as establishing, on the authority of Christ, the reality of demoniacal possessions. It also proves that Beelzebul and Satan were titles then applied to the same being,—the chief of evil spirits.

It need scarcely be remarked that, without reference to the cause of dumbness and blindness in the case before us, the instantaneous removal of these organic defects was "a supernatural event, evident to sense," a proper miracle, evidential to the disciples, and through their testimony to us, of the Divine mission of Christ.

We pass over, again, the naturalistic and mythical interpretations of these narratives, since they offer nothing of special interest, and our attention may be directed more profitably to the views of Farmer, Lardner, and others.

§ III. *Healing the two demoniacs of Gadara.*
Matt. viii. 28-34 ; ix. 1 ; Mark v. 1-21 ; Luke viii. 26-40.

These narratives are exceedingly instructive, and demand careful investigation.

(a) They differ without contradiction. *E. g.* according to many editions of the New Testament the evangelists do not all apply the same name to the locality of the event. But whether these editions are correct is doubtful ; the manuscripts do not agree ; and perhaps the true reading is the same in all.

Besides, the same locality may have belonged, as a place of burial, to the people of a town, and of the region in which the town was located, and may therefore have been called by the name of either with strict propriety. Furthermore, the same place may have been called by different names at different periods of its history, and of these names once applied a writer would be at liberty to employ the one most agreeable to himself. Dr. Thomson supposes that he has identified the place called in Origen's time Gergesa. "The walls can be traced all round, and there seem to have been considerable suburbs. In this Gersa or Chersa we have a position which fulfils every requirement of the narrative, and with a name so near that in Matthew as to be in itself a strong corroboration of the truth of this identification. It is within a few rods of the shore, and an immense mountain rises directly above it, in which are ancient tombs, out of some of which the two men possessed of the devils may have issued to meet Jesus. The lake is so near the base of the mountain that the swine rushing madly down it could not stop, but would be hurried on into the water and drowned. The place is one which

our Lord would be likely to visit, having Capernaum in full view on the north, and Galilee over against it, as Luke (viii. 26) says it was."¹ This then appears to be the exact site of the miracle, from which Gadara, a much larger and more important city, was two or three hours distant.

Again, one account says that the herd of swine was "a good way off from them," another, that it was "*at* the mountain," and a third, that it was "*in* the mountain." The last two statements have been said to contradict each other. But Luke may obviously have used the expression, "the mountain," in a somewhat broader sense than Mark, comprehending in it the lower heights or slopes which formed the base of the mountain proper. He could therefore say that the herd was ἐν τῷ ὄρει, while Mark could say with equal truth that it was πρὸς τῷ ὄρει. Alford remarks: "It may be observed that there is nothing in any of the three accounts to imply that the city was close to the scene of the miracle, or the scene of the miracle close to the herd of swine, or the herd of swine, at the time of their possession, close to the lake." Augustine says: "*Nec*

¹ See *Andrew's Life of our Lord*, p. 270, sq.

*quod Marcus dixit circa montem fuisse gregem porcorum, Lucas autem in monte, quidquam repugnat. Grex enim porcorum tam magnus fuit, ut aliquid ejus esset in monte, aliquid circa montem."*¹

Again, Matthew speaks of *two* demoniacs, while Mark and Luke speak of but *one*. Here we must apply the maxim of LeClerc: "*Qui plura narrat, pauciora complectitur; qui pauciora memorat, plura non negat.*"—The smaller number does not exclude the larger. For some reason, one of the demoniacs was far more prominent than the other; whether from his previous history, his subsequent history, or his conduct at the time, cannot be ascertained. The case is parallel to the miracle at Jericho, already examined.

(*b*) They agree without dependence. They testify unanimously, (1.) that Jesus had just come over the Sea of Tiberias, (2.) and had not proceeded far from the shore, (3.) when the demoniacs or demoniac met him; (4.) that these were living in tombs, (5.) and were very violent; (6.) that they cried out to Jesus, testifying, (7.) that he could have no fellowship with them; (8.) that he was the Son of God,

¹ *De Consensu Evangel, II. 24.*

(9.) and that they were in fear of punishment from him; (10.) that there was at some distance from them a herd of swine feeding; and (11.) into this herd the demons asked leave to enter; (12.) that Jesus gave them permission to do so; (13.) and forsaking the demoniacs they entered into the swine; (14.) that the herd now ran down a steep place into the sea, and (15.) perished in its waters; (16.) that upon this the keepers of the swine fled into the city, (17.) and there reported what had taken place; (18.) that the people then went forth to meet Jesus, (19.) and when they saw him entreated him to leave their borders, (20.) which he did, passing over to the other side of the lake. Besides these facts, recorded by all, Mark and Luke mention sundry particulars which serve to fill out the picture, and make the whole transaction pass before our eyes. The narrative of Mark is preëminently graphic and powerful.

(c) They testify of a real possession. The description of the principal sufferer, especially of his superhuman strength, the language coming from his lips, recognizing Jesus as the Son of God, and one who had nothing in common with the speaker, expressing a fear of

immediate judgment, and craving permission to enter the swine, are sufficient proofs of this; but the *giving* of this permission by Jesus, and the sudden *rush* of the swine into the lake, are absolutely decisive of the point. For if the demoniacs were simply insane, their insanity must have been transferred by direct agency of God to about two thousand swine, and in such peculiar circumstances as must have led all the observers to believe in real possessions. We see no possible way of evading this conclusion; and those who look upon the doctrine of demoniacal possessions as absurd, superstitious, or hurtful, are bound to face this conclusion, and show how the Saviour could not only refrain from correcting a hurtful error, but seemingly indorse it by a veritable miracle.

Says Mr. Farmer: "The unhappy man whose case we are considering, being, like other demoniacs, strongly tinctured with the *common opinion* about possessions, fancied himself really possessed; nay, sometimes, as was usual in such cases, personated the demon by whom he thought himself inspired, and spoke as if he was himself that demon." But if a belief in possessions was "the common

opinion," surely a maniac or epileptic could not have been called a demoniac without referring to the cause of his disorder; much less could Christ have sent insanity, under the name of demons, into a herd of swine, leading them to rush furiously into the sea, without seeming to indorse "the common opinion," and so establish it more firmly in the minds of thousands. We cannot possibly conceive of his doing this, and must therefore accept the doctrine of demoniacal possessions as a part of Christian truth.

On the other hand, Mr. Farmer draws from the narratives before us several arguments against this doctrine. These arguments may, however, all be reduced to one, viz: the supposed demons acted very absurdly and foolishly. E. g. (1.) The demoniac ran to meet Jesus, while an evil spirit would have sought to avoid him. But how do we know this? Is it absolutely certain that Jesus was at first and at a distance recognized by the demon? Are unclean spirits omniscient? Do they never, like evil men, rush into the jaws of destruction? May they not be blinded by passion? Their aims and hopes are not so easily determined. Craft is not wisdom. (2.)

The demoniac paid homage to Jesus, but a real demon would not have done this. Why not? Such homage might have seemed likely to authorize a conjecture that Jesus was in league with the kingdom of darkness, and whatever tended to make such an opinion plausible, must have seemed likely to weaken his influence and defeat his purpose. (3.) The reply of the demoniac, "My name is Legion, for we are many," was too absurd for an evil spirit to utter. "If one demon alone can, as it is supposed he can, deprive a man of his sight and speech and hearing, and of his reason too, and do all this in a moment, why should a legion of demons be employed, and lose that time which they might have spent in doing mischief elsewhere?"¹ Whether the reply in question was true or false, we may be unable to say with perfect confidence, but in either case we have no right to pronounce it more absurd than many acts of Satan himself. "Satan may well be named shrewd, but not wise; he may be said to have understanding, but not reason."²

These narratives are also assailed from an-

¹ *On the Demoniacs*, etc. p. 155, note.

² Philippi, *Kirchliche Glaubenslehre*, III. p. 244.

other quarter. They represent Christ, it is said, as virtually permitting the destruction of a large herd of swine ; a permission which could not have been given by one who came to save and not to destroy, and who respected the rights of man.

In reply we remark, on the one hand, that Christ came to save the souls of men, not the lives of swine ; and on the other hand, that he violated no rights of man by granting such a permission. "The cattle upon a thousand hills" were his. Says Mr. Farmer : 'Should any inquire into the reasons of this divine dispensation, I might answer, that he who gave life to all hath a right to resume it, and doth often resume it both from men and beasts, and visit their bodies with disorders, for reasons unsearchable by the human understanding.'¹ He then specifies several wise and important purposes that were answered by the miraculous destruction of the swine, the last of which is this : "Though the gospel, considered as a dispensation of mercy, was with great propriety confirmed chiefly by miracles of mercy ; yet it was necessary there should be some examples of severity, to check

¹ *On the Demoniacs*, etc. p. 178.

the presumption of mankind in all ages ; and to warn them of the danger of rejecting a divine prophet, who, though he eminently appeared as the messenger of God's love, was also the appointed minister of his justice."¹

§ IV. *A dumb demoniac restored.* Matthew ix. 32-34.

The narrative states that a demoniac was brought to Jesus, and the demon cast out; that the man while possessed was dumb, but spake when the demon was expelled ; that the crowds were astonished, and said : "It never so appeared in Israel ;" while the Pharisees declared, "He casteth out the demons by the prince of the demons."—This narrative is simple, direct, brief; *multum in parvo*. It manifestly does not relate a natural event, nor does it read like a legend ; but it bears all the marks of historical truth which could be expected in so brief a passage.

§ V. *Healing the daughter of the Syro-Phœnician woman.* Matt. xv. 21-28 ; Mark vii. 24-30.

(a) These accounts are in no respect contradictory. De Wette, Meyer, and Strauss seem

¹ *On the Demoniacs, etc.* p. 182.

to admit this fact; at least, they fail to point out any contradiction. The differences are such as prove that neither of the evangelists drew his account from the other, and that is all. We are therefore entitled to regard them as independent witnesses, supporting each other.

(b) They agree in their statement of the leading facts. To show this we will give in their order all the particulars mentioned in the text, and compare those given by both evangelists with those given by only one. (1.) Jesus went from Capernaum into the "borders of Tyre and Sidon"; and (2.) as he was passing along (in the street) a woman came and cried to him for mercy, (3.) addressing him as the Son of David, (4.) and saying, "My daughter is sorely vexed with a demon." (5.) Jesus made no reply to her request, but (6.) his disciples at length drawing near asked him to send her away, (7.) because of her crying after them.¹ (8.) He replied so distinctly as to be heard by the

¹ "Oh, unworthy sentiment! to be less touched by the anguish and supplications of a mother who sees her daughter in the power of a demon, than by the trouble and embarrassment that she gives!" Adolphe Monod. *The Omnipotence of Faith*, in *Select Discourses from the French and German*, p. 187.

woman: "I was not sent, except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (9.) Jesus now entered into a house, (10.) because he did not wish to be known in the place; (11.) but the mother here approached him, (12.) prostrated herself at his feet, (13.) entreated the Lord to help her, and (14.) cast the demon out of her daughter. (15.) Jesus replied, "Let the children first be fed;" (16.) "for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." (17.) The woman answered: "Yea, Lord; for the dogs also eat of the children's crumbs that fall under their master's table." (18.) Jesus then said: "O, woman, great is thy faith"; (19.) "for this word, go thy way"; (20.) "let it be to thee as thou wishest;" (21.) "the demon has gone out of thy daughter." (22.) Her daughter was healed from that hour; and (23.) she herself, returning to her house, (24.) found the demon gone, and (25.) her daughter lying quietly on the bed. (26.) The woman who exhibited such faith in the miraculous power of Jesus was a Canaanite or Syro-Phœnician by descent, and (27.) a Greek or pagan in religion.

Now of these twenty-seven particulars only

five are found in both narratives (namely 1, 11, 16, 17, 26); but of the rest, four expressions in Matthew (13, 18, 20, 22) are so nearly equivalent to four in Mark (14, 19, 21, 24) that the latter may be substituted for the former, or *vice versa*, without affecting the coherence or purport of the narrative, so that there are thirteen parallel and equivalent statements in the two accounts. Of the remaining particulars, seven are given by Matthew (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) and seven by Mark (9, 10, 12, 15, 23, 25, 27), and all are in perfect keeping with the facts related by both writers. This instance of harmony in diversity is remarkable and instructive. A fastidiously exact criticism might increase the number of items by dividing *one* and *twenty-six*, leaving but three common statements and giving six pairs of equivalent expressions. No one, then, can affirm, with any show of reason, that either of these writers adjusted his account to that of the other. Yet the spirit and bearing, both of our Saviour and of the woman, are the same in both narratives; so likewise is the description of the sufferer and her recovery. It is also worthy of notice, that while certain expressions in

Matthew may be substituted for others in Mark without changing the purport of the narrative, these equivalent terms are not identical, but may be combined together without tautology; so that each account makes its report, so far as it goes, with all conceivable accuracy, and the two accounts are mutually complementary.

The faith and humility of this Gentile mother rival, if they do not surpass, those of the centurion. Tried by the sharpest tests, they are found to be genuine, and, in answer to importunate prayer, a blessing measured by the suppliant's will is instantly bestowed. The miracle was wrought, "not to avoid the wearisome solicitations of a sufferer, but as a result of the closest sympathy with her spiritual nature."¹ "Ah! what heroism can be compared with that of the poor Canaanitish woman, whose name even is unknown to us, who will not doubt of Jesus Christ, whatever may do or say the world, whatever the apostles may do or say; nay, more, whatever may be done or said by Jesus Christ himself; and who, invading his retreat, braving his coldness, wearying his silence, confounding

¹ Westcott.

his denials, finally constrains him, I say not merely to hear, but to admire his creature!"¹

(c) Paulus, after describing the interview with Jesus, proceeds thus: "The sick daughter was in the same village,—and when the mother came home, she was lying quietly, without any paroxysm, on her bed. Hence the inference that the demon had been already banished. The mother naturally repeated Jesus' promise of help, and both she and her daughter were convinced that the quiet of the latter would from this time be permanent. . . . But, according to Mark, Jesus *knew* that the mother would find her daughter quiet. . . . It appears, therefore, at all events, that while Jesus put on a severe aspect to the petitioner, he had already, even before the mother hoped, *sent one of his apostles to cure the maiden.* (!) Unfriendly in word, he had been the more beneficent in deed."²

If this hypothesis is correct, the evangelists have passed over in silence a fact *essential* to a proper view of Christ's agency in the cure. And this kind of omission is so frequent as to be *characteristic* of their narratives. All

¹ Adolphe Monod's *St. Paul*, Meyer's translation, pp. 188, 190.

² II. p. 410.

the gospels exhibit the same oversight. Those facts which would suggest a naturalistic explanation of the cures wrought by Christ must be almost uniformly supplied by the interpreter. There can be but one reason for this; the evangelists were not aware of any such facts; all the circumstances cognizable by their senses went to prove these cures miraculous; and so the naturalistic hypothesis falls to the ground.

(*d*) Strauss bestows no special attention on the narrative before us; but he considers the events reviewed in the present section to be in part mythical and in part natural. To give his criticisms in detail would be unprofitable.

§ VI. *Healing the lunatic boy.* Matt. xvii. 14–21; Mark ix. 14–29; and Luke ix. 37–43.

On these accounts we submit the following remarks:—

(*a*) They differ without disagreement. Their independence of one another is evident on even a cursory perusal. Says Alford: “The account of Mark is by far the most copious; and here, which is very rarely the case in the official life of our Lord, the three ac-

counts appear to have been *originally different and independent.*" The relative clause of this sentence is hardly correct, but the last and chief statement is certainly true. The attempt of Strauss to point out certain discrepancies between the different narratives is so manifest a failure that the substantial harmony may be asserted without fear. For of all the hunters after contradictions in the gospels, he is the most skilful and persistent.

(b) They all bear witness to the essential points of the miracle. They agree in declaring (1.) that Jesus had just come down from the Mount of Transfiguration; (2.) that there was a multitude in the place when the miracle was wrought; (3.) that a certain man approached him and besought him to heal his son; (4.) that this son was afflicted with epilepsy, (5.) and was also in the power of a demon; (6.) that the father had previously asked the disciples to heal his son, (7.) and they had failed in their attempts to do so; (8.) that Jesus, hearing this, cried: "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you and suffer you? Bring him to me" (or "bring thy son to me." Luke); (9.) that Jesus rebuked the evil spirit; (10.) that the demon

came out of the lad, and (11.) so the lad was healed.

Many other particulars are given by one or more of the evangelists, and especially by Mark, which serve to make the history more graphic and impressive; but they are all in harmony with these common facts and with the entire spirit of the Gospel; we may therefore pass them by with this meagre reference. Yet it may be well to note the following points. The demoniac whose cure is related in the text, had been afflicted in the same way from childhood. Hence possessions were not always due to any peculiar form or degree of wickedness in their subjects (Mark ix. 21). Again, the demon in the present case seems to have been in the habit of departing from his victim for a time and then returning (Luke ix. 39). Indeed, the occasional exit of the evil spirit appears to have been reluctant, and perhaps forced, reminding us of our Saviour's recognition of Jewish exorcists. And, once more, Jesus intimates that he is omnipotent, that the only limits to his power are moral (Mark ix. 23). But we cannot pause to discuss these points, however interesting.

Yet the chief purpose of our study requires us to say that, whatever may be the true theory of possessions, the cure of the lunatic boy was evidently miraculous. And the miracle was wrought in answer to a father's intercession,—illustrating once more the power of prayer. Moreover, the failure of the disciples to cast out the demon and effect a cure, when viewed in the light of Christ's explanation, is full of meaning, and may be said to typify the many failures in Christian effort to rescue men from the spiritual grasp of Satan.

Before leaving this section we must look at a few objections to the reality of demoniacal possessions. And in the first place, they are said to be inconsistent with the Christian ideas of God and man,—of God as just and man as responsible. For no one, it is affirmed, can be honorably held responsible for his conduct, unless he is master of his own powers and therefore protected from the tyranny of spiritual foes. Hence a just God, having given to man a moral nature, must protect that nature from foreign violence. This objection, if we are not in error, presupposes that a disloyal being, in moral fel-

lowship with sin and Satan, is entitled to the same protection as a loyal being; which is by no means self-evident. It also presupposes that the soul of a demoniac is responsible for the action of his body when the latter is under the control of a demon, which is altogether improbable, except in so far as it approves and indorses that action. To adopt the language of Rothe, we say: "The fact of demoniacal possessions seems to us no more incompatible with human freedom than the fact of occasional madness or idiocy."

In the second place, similar possessions do not, it is said, occur at the present day, and therefore it is safe to deny their occurrence at the time of Christ. But how is it known that they do not occur even now? To prove this negative is impossible; but if proved, the inference drawn from it is not valid against respectable testimony. The same argument would lead to a denial of Christ's advent in the flesh. Indeed, it is the oft-refuted argument against the credibility of miracles on human testimony: But it is worthless. We are not even required to point out any probable reasons for the permission of extra Satanic activity at the time

of Christ. For the moral government of God has many secrets which we need not understand before listening to the voice of testimony. The facts of religion are one thing and the philosophy of it another; the former may be properly attested while the latter is still hidden from our view.

Yet the following remarks of Westcott are suggestive. After alluding to the widespread outward distress in the Roman Empire at the time of Christ, he says: "The spiritual distress of the time was not less real nor less felt. The faith in the old religions was dead, and nothing was as yet found to take their place. The Jew emulated the philosophy of the Greek; the Roman sought repose in the teaching of the East. On all sides the religious and the thoughtful rushed into wild orgies to assert the vigor of life which they felt to be failing, or took refuge in strange mysteries in the hope of unriddling the secrets which wearied them. The fences of spiritual life were, as a general rule, broken down, and men lay exposed in a peculiar manner to the assaults of those powers of evil whose mightiest energies culminated in the era of the Incarnation. The extreme

necessities of man coincided with the highest manifestation of the love of God. In the fulness of time the kingdom of Satan was openly displayed that it might be openly conquered. Then, and not till then, there was, if I may so speak, a clear revelation of evil, because men were able to support it in the strength of the Son of God. The Tempter was seen in the fulness of his worldly dominion at the moment when he was met and vanquished. . . . In this way the miracles on the spirit-world complete the public signs of Christ's ministry."¹

In the third place, demons are identified with pagan deities and then pronounced imaginary beings. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "What then do I say? that an idol-offering is anything? or that an idol is anything? but that what they sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God"; and again: "We know that an idol is nothing in the world."² In reply it may be remarked that the word demon is not restricted in its application to pagan deities, the departed

¹ *Characteristics*, pp. 80, 81; cf. Neander's *Life of Christ*, p. 145, sq.

² 1 Cor. x. 20, 21, and viii. 4.

spirits of bad men, but is used to signify evil spirits, whether human or angelic. This fact is admitted by the best lexicographers, and may be received as unquestionable. Hence the objection is futile.

In the fourth place, the doctrine of possessions tends, it is alleged, to foster superstition and imposture, and cannot therefore be a part of Christian truth. Undoubtedly this doctrine has been abused—and what Christian truth has not?—but we see no reason for charging it with any necessary tendency to superstition. The Christian doctrine of good angels—ministering spirits—is not to be rejected because the papists have been guilty of worshipping angels.

These, in brief, are the principal objections, and we think them inconclusive.¹ But were they so strong as to make us doubt whether evil spirits did at that time take possession of men and were ejected by Christ, it would

¹ See Appleton's *Lectures on Demoniacs*, (XXV. XXVI. XXVII.); Canonicus (Rev. Wm. Shedd) *On the Existence and Agency of Fallen Spirits*; Ebrard in *Hartzog's Real. Encycl. für Theol.* Vol. III. p. 240, sq.; Trench *On Miracles*, p. 125, sq.; Neander, *Life of Christ*, p. 145, sq.; Farmer *On Demoniacs*; Jahn, *Bib. Arch.* p. 214, sq.; Winer, *R. W. B.*, I. p. 161, sq., art. *Besessene*.

still be certain, according to the gospel records, that madness, epilepsy, dumbness, and other maladies, were in these instances cured by the word of Jesus, and such cures must be pronounced genuine miracles.

CHAPTER V.

RAISING THE DEAD.

THE narratives to be considered in this chapter deserve careful study. The miracles which they describe have been often pronounced the highest manifestations of divine power in the person of Christ. They must be classed, to say the least, *with* the most signal displays of his miraculous power. No others, except perhaps the feeding of the multitudes and the changing of water into wine, can be deemed so extraordinary. "Between being and the negative of being," says Trench, "the opposition is not relative but absolute: between death and life a gulf lies, which nothing that nature lends, helps us even in imagination to bridge over."

§ I. *Raising Jairus' daughter to life.* Matt. ix. 18-26; Mark v. 22-43; Luke viii. 41-56.

On these three accounts of the same event we remark,

(a) That they differ without contradiction.

The first difference worthy of notice is in the language of Jairus to Christ when suing for help. According to Matthew, he speaks of his daughter as "just now dead"; according to Mark, as "at the point of death"; and according to Luke, as "dying." In the original text the last two expressions are synonymous, signifying that in the father's opinion, his child was breathing its last when he flew to Jesus. Assuming their language to be an accurate version or report of his words, at least so far as it goes, is it possible to regard Mathew's report as accurate also? We think it is.

For Mark intimates by the words "besought him much" — πολλά — that his own account contains but a part of what the ruler said. The petition was earnest and full. And why might he not speak of his daughter as "just now dead," since, if expiring when he left her side, she could hardly be alive when he had found Jesus. Not only would the disciples gather from his words that his little daughter was already dead, but he himself would be likely to use language importing this. Nor is this view refuted by the exhortation of Christ: "Fear not, only believe," when persons from

his house reported to Jairus the certain death of his child,—an exhortation which seems to imply that the idea of her actual death had not been previously admitted by the father, and was now shaking his faith in Christ's power to help. For the influence of sympathy is great, and the tone with which these messengers had announced the event and admonished him not to trouble the Master, implying the utter impossibility of aid from him, was in danger perhaps of destroying his trust in the Saviour. Hence the gracious exhortation.

But we may also suppose that Jairus, speaking in Aramaic, used a word which could be rendered into Greek by either the Aorist or the Imperfect, so that while with a father's heart, he could bring himself to say explicitly no more than this, that his daughter was dying or breathing her last, the true import of his words, their meaning to others, their testimony interpreted by the circumstances, was this, that his child had "just now died." According to this hypothesis Matthew's version is *ad sensum*, while Mark's and Luke's is *ad literam*. Matthew gives what the suppliant father virtually, though half concealing it from his own consciousness, testified; Mark and

Luke give what he was distinctly conscious of saying.

Again, it has been supposed, that, for the sake of brevity, Matthew puts into the lips of Jairus the sum of what was reported to Christ by the ruler himself, and by the messengers, also, respecting his daughter, thus sacrificing accuracy of detail and chronology, but giving a truthful representation of the miracle as a whole. Every abridgment of history does the same thing to a greater or less extent. Substantial truth remains, but not perfect accuracy of detail.

A second difference may be observed in the official designations given to Jairus; but it is one which presents not even a show of contradiction.

A third difference may be found in the words used to designate his child, namely, "daughter," "little daughter," "only begotten daughter," and also, at a later stage in the narrative, "damsel," "little child," and "girl;"¹ but this variety merely proves the freedom and originality of the several accounts. The other points of difference are equally unimportant, except as notes of independence in the writers.

¹ The words which we have thus rendered are, *θυγάτηρ*, *θυγάτριον*, *θυγάτηρ μονογενής*, and *κοράσιον*, *παιδίον*, *ἡ παῖς*.

(*b*) They bear witness in common to the leading facts. These are as follows: (1.) The petitioner was a synagogue ruler. (2.) He came himself to Christ, and (3.) with reverence besought him (4.) to repair to his house, and (5.) restore his daughter, (6.) who was now dying, or just dead, (7.) by laying his hand upon her. (8.) Jesus, with his disciples, accompanied the ruler as desired, and (9.) on their way the woman who had an issue of blood was healed. (10.) Reaching the ruler's house Jesus went in, and (11.) found a crowd of mourners already assembled, (12.) to bewail according to custom the child's death. (13.) He put a stop to their lamentation as causeless, and (14.) declared, "The child died not, but sleepeth." (15.) The mourners answered this statement with derisive laughter; (16.) but Jesus sent forth the whole crowd, (17.) took the child by the hand, and (18.) she at once arose.

These are the principal facts. Mark and Luke add several particulars, which, though not strictly essential, serve to bring the event more distinctly before us. They inform us, e. g. that the ruler's name was Jairus; that while on his way home with Jesus, he was

informed by a messenger of his child's death ; that Jesus encouraged him, saying, " Fear not, only believe ;" that Christ suffered no one to enter the house with him but Peter, James, and John ; that he permitted these only with the child's parents to witness the miracle ; that he said to the girl, as he took her hand, " Damsel, arise ;" and that he charged those present not to report the miracle. These further details are attested by the joint evidence of Mark and Luke, and are in perfect harmony with the facts related by all three evangelists. It is also interesting to find Mark giving the very words addressed to the child by our Saviour, and then translating them into Greek for his readers. This fact may be regarded as favorable to our suggestion, that Jairus made use of the Aramaic tongue in first giving an account of his daughter to Jesus.

(*c*) They describe a restoration from actual death to life. This has been denied by several critics, e. g. Paulus, Olshausen, Rothe ; and the words of Christ, " She died not, but sleepeth," are brought forward to justify their denial. They insist upon a literal interpretation of his words in the present case, and throw out the hint that a different interpre-

tation must have sprung from a desire to magnify the miracles of Jesus. We do not believe that any such desire has led the great majority of expositors, including such men as De Wette, Meyer, Fritzsche, Calvin, Alford, Ellicott, Bengel, Alexander, and others, to give a different interpretation to our Saviour's words, and to hold that, according to the text, he actually raised to life again a person who was dead. Fritzsche paraphrases the words of Christ thus: "*Puellam ne pro mortuâ habetote, sed dormire existimatote, quippe in vitam mox redituram;*" and Bengel, thus: "*Puella ob resurrectionem mox futuram, et celeriter, et certo, et facile, non erat annumeranda mortuis olim resurrecturis, sed dormientibus.*" It must be remembered that the word "sleeps" is here used, at all events, in a tropical sense; for nothing short of a swoon or trance, affording all the usual phenomena of death, will meet the plain demands of the context; and a swoon is not, properly and literally speaking, sleep. It is but one degree nearer to sleep than is temporary death. It will also be remembered that Jesus said of another, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," though he was already dead.¹

¹ John xi. 11-14.

The words of Christ in the text may therefore, we think, be understood without violence as signifying that the child's death, though real, would be transient. In favor of this view may be adduced the following circumstances :—

According to Matthew, the words of Jairus, properly understood, furnished evidence of his daughter's death. According to Mark and Luke, the friends at home became fully assured of her death, and a message to that effect was brought to the ruler. According to all the narratives, her decease had been duly verified, professional mourners were already in the house bewailing the departed, and so certain were they of their task that the words of Jesus: "She is not dead, but sleeps," were followed by them with derisive laughter. And finally, according to Luke, they laughed him to scorn, "*knowing* that she was dead;" he does not say "believing," or "supposing" that she was dead, but "*knowing*" this to be the case. Hence Luke appears to affirm the reality of her death. Some have appealed to the words of Jesus in Matthew xi. 5, as a further reason for believing that a proper restoration of life was

effected in the present instance. On the whole, we think the preponderance of evidence decidedly in favor of the common view, and cannot therefore hesitate in adducing this miracle as a proof of Christ's power to raise the dead.

(*d*) Paulus and Strauss deal very confidently with this portion of gospel history. The former supposes that Jesus learned from the father by careful inquiry the actual state of his daughter, who was in a swoon; that in comparative secrecy he made use of medical processes and applications to restore her to sense and consciousness; and that the witnesses were forbidden to make known the means and mode of cure. The latter refutes very handsomely this naturalistic interpretation, but appeals to alleged contradictions in the narratives, and to additions made by Mark and Luke, as arguments for a mythical interpretation. It is perhaps unnecessary to offer any strictures upon either of these skeptical assaults upon the plain meaning of the text. The foundations of the latter, as well as of the former, are imaginary.

§ II. *Raising the widow's son.* Luke vii. 11-17.

The following particulars are mentioned by the evangelist. (1.) Jesus was going into a city called Nain. (2.) Very many of his disciples, in the broader sense of that word, were going along with him ; and (3.) also a great multitude. (4.) As he drew near the gate a funeral procession came out, (5.) noticeable for the great crowd of inhabitants which formed it. (6.) The deceased was the only son of his mother, and (7.) this mother was a widow. (8.) Seeing her, Jesus was touched with compassion, and (9.) said to her, "Weep not." (10.) He then approached the bier, (11.) and touched it ; (12.) the bearers halted, and (13.) he said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." (14.) The dead sat up and (15.) began to speak, and (16.) Christ gave him to his mother. (17.) All the beholders were filled with fear, and (18.) glorified God, (19.) for raising up a great prophet, and (20.) looking upon his people ; and (21.) the report concerning Jesus spread through all the region around.

Such is the story of Luke, brief, plain, consistent, and to all appearance artless. Twice does he himself affirm the death of the young man, and all the circumstances mentioned go to establish the same fact.

"He looked upon her, and his heart was moved.
 "Weep not!" he said; and as they stayed the bier,
 And at his bidding laid it at his feet,
 He gently drew the pall from out her grasp,
 And laid it back in silence from the dead.
 With troubled wonder the mute throng drew near,
 And gazed on his calm looks.

A minute's space

He stood and prayed. Then, taking the cold hand,
 He said, "Arise!" And instantly the breast
 Heaved in its cerements, and a sudden flush
 Ran through the lines of the divided lips,
 And, with a murmur of his mother's name,
 He trembled and sat upright in his shroud.
 And, while the mourner hung upon his neck,
 Jesus went calmly on his way to Nain."¹

Paulus, indeed, proclaims the absurdity of supposing Christ to have addressed a person really dead, because a corpse cannot hear; but the remark, if such a thing be possible, is unusually frivolous; it assumes there was no miracle in the case, and this sort of assumption is *characteristic* of nearly all who reject the gospel miracles. We say then that nothing whatever in the text suggests either a naturalistic or mythical explanation of it.

§ III. *Raising Lazarus from the dead.* John xi. 1-46.

For the sake of brevity, we shall mention

¹ N. P. Willis.

only the leading facts, adding now and then a necessary comment. (1.) Lazarus of Bethany, the brother of Mary and Martha, was sick, and as may be inferred from the sequel, to all human appearance near his end. (2.) His sisters therefore sent a messenger to Jesus, who was now on the east side of the Jordan, saying, "Lord, behold, whom thou lovest is sick." (3.) Jesus sent back the answer: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it." Yet Lazarus was in all probability even now dead, or at the point of death; certainly he must have expired before this reply reached his sisters. (See 6, 17.)

(4.) Jesus abode two days longer in the place where he was, and then proposed to return into Judea. His disciples reminded him of the peril of such a step, but he vindicated his purpose by showing the safety and need of working while it is day. (5.) He then laid before them the special reason for his return to Judea: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him." As they misunderstood his words, Jesus said to them plainly: "Lazarus died: and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that

ye may believe." By this language he intimated, that had he been present, Lazarus would have been restored to health instead of dying, and also that he would now be raised, a more signal miracle, (cf. verse 11.)

(6.) When Jesus arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been four days in the tomb, and many Jews from the neighboring city had come to comfort the sisters for the loss of their brother. This was in harmony with Jewish custom at that time. (7.) Hearing of Christ's approach, Martha went at once to meet him; but Mary was sitting at the time in the house. Whether she also heard of Christ's arrival, or not, is perhaps doubtful; to us it seems slightly more natural to suppose that she did not, (cf. Luth. II. p. 209.)

(8.) On meeting Jesus, Martha said: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died; but even now I know, that whatever thou shalt ask of God, God will give it thee." Here Martha expresses, first, her assurance of the love of Christ and his power to heal the sick, and then, most reverently, her belief, that if he saw fit, he could secure from God the restoration of her brother to life. Perhaps the message which had been received from

✱

Christ after her brother's death (see verse 4) suggested this latter expression. (9.) In a brief conversation with Martha, Jesus proceeded to set forth the great truth which he was about to illustrate partially by raising Lazarus from the dead. "I am the resurrection and the life," etc. His aim was to convince Martha that all life was in him and from him; that all who had fallen asleep in Jesus should be raised at last by him; and hence that he could now restore her brother to life.

(10.) By direction of Jesus, Martha then went to her house and called her sister. This she did secretly, either because she thought Mary would not choose to meet the Saviour in a crowd, or because the Jews present were many of them bitter enemies of Christ. Knowing the presence and wish of Jesus, Mary rises quickly and comes to him out of the village; and the Jews, conjecturing that she had gone to the tomb to weep, followed her. (11.) Seeing Jesus, she fell at his feet and said: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," thus using the same words, and in almost the same order, which her sister had already employed. This

repetition appears to us, in the circumstances, extremely natural. It reveals the substance of what the sisters had often said in their hearts and to each other during the four days since their brother's death.

(12.) Then followed the mysterious emotion of Jesus, his question, "Where have ye laid him?" his actual weeping, the comments of the Jews, with a reference to his healing of the blind man in Jerusalem, the coming to the tomb, and the description of it as a cave, with a stone lying upon it.

(13.) When now Jesus directed those present to take away the stone,¹ Martha inter-

1 "The door of that house of death was strong and impenetrable: the first word was, 'Take away the stone!' O weak beginning of a mighty miracle! If thou meantest to raise the dead, how much more easy had it been for thee to remove the gravestone! One grain of faith in thy very disciples was enough to remove mountains, and dost thou say, 'Take away the stone?' I doubt not but there was a greater weight that lay upon the body of Lazarus than the stone of his tomb—the weight of death and corruption. . . . Thy command to remove the stone seemed to argue an impotence; straight that seeming weakness breaks forth into an act of omnipotent power. The homeliest shows of thine human infirmity are ever seconded with some mighty proofs of thy Godhead; and thy miracle is so much more wondered at, by how much it was less expected. It was ever thy just will that we should do what we may. To remove the stone, or to untie the napkin, was in their power; this they must do: to raise the

posed, saying: "Already it scenteth, for it is now the fourth day since the burial." The words ἤδη ὄζει probably state a known fact and not a mere inference. The sisters may have been often there, pondering the message which they had received from Christ, and hoping till it was no longer possible to do so, that the body of their brother would be kept from decay until the Saviour came. (14.) Jesus encouraged Martha to believe, and when the stone was taken away, and, for the sake of the crowd present, he had given thanks aloud to God for hearing him in this instance as always, he cried with a loud voice: "Lazarus, come forth!" (15.) And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and with a napkin about his face. Jesus then said to them: "Loose him and let him go." (16.) Many of the Jews who witnessed this miracle believed in Christ, but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

These are the leading facts of this account, and they are certainly coherent and harmonious throughout. As to the lessons of this

dead was out of their power; this therefore thou wilt do alone."
—*Bishop Hall*, p. 557.

miracle, it may be noticed that, in raising the dead, Christ revealed himself as the Restorer of life, as One whose authority reaches beyond the limits of the seen and sensible into the realm of the unseen and spiritual, calling departed souls from their rest and clothing them anew with bodies mortal or immortal.

“ See from the yawning tomb,
Bound in the solemn vestments of the grave,
Comes forth the living Lazarus ! Ah ! see
Upon his pallid cheek returning life
Breathe roseate hues, and his unclosing eye
Beam with new radiance. Hail ! thou mystic type
Of that great day, when, with the thunder’s voice,
The King of kings to earth’s remotest climes
Shall speak his will ; when the unpeopled graves
Shall render up their dead, and all shall stand,
Like Lazarus, before a judging God.” ¹

And not only this, but the lower is typical of a higher,—the Restorer of natural life is the Restorer of spiritual also ; the renewal of the soul, its resurrection from moral death, is due to the power of Christ. As the true life, Jesus now gives to those who are his spiritual and eternal life, and he will raise them up at the last day. “ O Saviour, while thou now sittest gloriously in heaven, thou dost no less impart thyself unto us, than if

¹ William Bolland.

thou stoodst visibly by us, than if we stood locally by thee ! No place can make difference of thy virtue and aid.”¹ It may also be remarked that, in his love to this believing household, Jesus goes beyond their faith ; he bestows upon the sisters a blessing which they scarcely venture to ask. He proves himself to be One “that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.”²

Yet we must look at some objections to the credibility of this narrative. And first, it is not confirmed by any parallel accounts in the synoptical gospels. The circumstance, we reply, is indeed noticeable, but one which we cannot be justly required to explain. So great and impressive a miracle must doubtless have fixed itself forever in the minds of the apostles, and must have been known to all the evangelists. But we are manifestly, to a great extent, ignorant of the principles which guided them severally in their selection of facts from the life of Christ. That they did not each one relate all which they knew is evident. A higher wisdom than that of man appears to have controlled their choice,

¹ Bishop Hall.

² Eph. iii. 20.

and we therefore reject the argument from silence as worthless.

Secondly, the delay of Jesus to visit Bethany when informed of his friend's sickness; his permitting Lazarus to die instead of healing him from a distance, is said to be incredible. For it surely was not necessary for Lazarus to die in order that Jesus might have some one to raise from the dead. Opportunities were not likely to be wanting, if he wished thus to increase the faith of his disciples. To this we reply, that it may have been *already* too late to save the life of his friend, when the message reached Jesus. Lazarus was probably now dead, and, within four or five hours, laid in the tomb. And if so, it is not surprising that Christ abode yet two days in the place where he was; for, purposing to raise Lazarus, it was important to defer this act till there could be no possible doubt of his death. Besides, fit opportunities for raising the dead, or doing other mighty works, may not have been so numerous as some imagine. "They are essentially," says Westcott, "a part of the revelation, and not merely a proof of it; pledges of a redemption wrought, foreshadows of a redemp-

tion realized." (p. 34.) Hence they could not be wrought irrespective of moral conditions.

Finally, the peculiar emotion of Jesus, as described in verses 33, 35, and 38, is said to be incredible. He could not in the circumstances have been disturbed with indignation or grief, for he was about to fill all hearts with joy; it was an hour of triumph, and his glory was to be signally manifested. This objection is rash and superficial. Those who make it assume an extraordinary, yea, supernatural knowledge of all the recesses of thought and feeling in the soul of Christ. But why should not the grief of Mary and the feigned sorrow of the Jews have occasioned deep emotion, sympathy mingled with indignation, in Christ, so that his frame shook? We may refer in this connection to our remarks on the spiritual sufferings of Christ during his ministry (pp. 32-34), which, if correct, go far to account for his peculiar emotion in the present case.

Paulus deals with the record of John as follows: (1.) Jesus ascertained by careful inquiry from the messenger who was sent to him all the particulars of his friend's condition, and thereupon said: This sickness will

not prove fatal; Lazarus will recover; God will be thanked; and Messiah will be praised for predicting this issue, and thereby quieting (!) the hearts of his friends. But Paulus here supplies the basis of his view and reduces the sense of Christ's language to a minimum. (2.) Confident of his friend's safety, Jesus abode where he was; but towards evening of the second day another messenger from Bethany reported to him the death of Lazarus. Here again a circumstance not mentioned in the text is necessary to the naturalistic view,—a circumstance the omission of which changes materially the obvious meaning of the account. (3.) Jesus at once resolves to visit Bethany; he suspects that the sudden death may be, as he had found in the case of Jairus's daughter, no more than a deep insensibility or swoon; he therefore says to his disciples: "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, and I go to awake him." But his disciples see no reason for his so doing, at the risk of life; hence, to remove their scruples, he adopts the language of the messenger, saying, Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes, that ye may prove your fidelity by going with me into danger. This

explanation is far-fetched and impossible. Every sentence of the text condemns it. (4.) Jesus directed the stone to be removed that he might look in and see the face of Lazarus. And so soon as he had looked into the cave, and before speaking a word, he gave thanks to God for hearing him. "Does it not follow that he at once saw his friend to be alive?"¹ Hence he called him with a *loud* voice, which would have been needless in case he was dead, "Lazarus, come forth!" We leave this representation to refute itself; only remarking, that Strauss has very carefully exposed its falsity.

To justify a mythical view of John's narrative, Strauss himself appeals to the want of any rational motive for the raising of Lazarus, to the fact of his social and historical obscurity,² to the delay of Christ in Perea that he might be able to work a greater miracle, to the incredible stupidity of his

¹ And could Jesus, at the first glance into a dark cavern, see by certain slight movements of the face, undetected by others, that Lazarus was still alive? What ridicule would a Paulus or a Strauss make of such a conjecture, if it suited their purpose to do so!

² Cf. Woolston's *5th Discourse*, and the *Reply*, in *Theological Tracts*.

disciples, according to verse 12, sq., to the unnatural reference of the Jews to his curing the blind rather than to his previous raising the dead,¹ (verse 37,) to the absurd prayer of Christ, uttered, according to the text, for the edification of his hearers,² (verse 41, sq.,) to the total ignorance³ of the first three evangelists of any such miracle as John describes, and to the instances of raising the dead reported in the Old Testament.

These points are elaborately discussed, and a plausible argument against the truth of John's record is built upon them. But it is utterly unsound; and, in our opinion, it has been sufficiently honored by exposing its foundations, without stopping to remove them. Indeed, some of them have been previously

¹ Unnatural, if this were a myth constructed, however unconsciously, to illustrate the Messiah's power to raise the dead; but extremely natural, if it is history, for the Jews in Jerusalem were most familiar with the great miracle of restoring to sight the man who was born blind.

² Why should not Jesus acknowledge his intimate fellowship with the Father aloud for the instruction and benefit of his hearers? Was it improper to convey the truth into their minds in such a way?

³ Strauss always assumes that the evangelists tell all they know. It is to be feared that some of their critics go even further, and tell what they do not know.

scrutinized by us, and found unstable. Hence the record of that disciple whom Jesus loved may be accepted without hesitation as perfectly true. Lazarus died and was raised from the dead: Christ is the resurrection and the life.¹

¹ Besides the miracles which are described by the evangelists, many more are referred to in general terms. We have marked the following passages; perhaps there are others: Matthew iv. 23, 24; viii. 16, 17; ix. 35; xi. 5, 21, sq.; xii. 15; xiv. 2, 14; xv. 30, 31; xix. 2. Mark i. 32-34, 39; iii. 10, 11; vi. 13, 14. Luke iv. 30, 40, 41; v. 15; vi. 18, 19; vii. 21, 22; viii. 2, 3; ix. 6, 7, 11; x. 17; xiii. 32; xxii. 50, 51. John ii. 23; iii. 2; xi. 47; xii. 37; xx. 30. "*The healing of Malchus*, which is mentioned by St. Luke (xxii. 51), while the other evangelists only speak of his wound, seems to lie without the true cycle of the evangelical miracles. In this Christ is seen to meet and remedy the evils which are wrought among men by the false zeal of his own followers."—*Westcott*. Why this act should be said "to lie without the true cycle of evangelical miracles," we cannot see. That no other instance of the kind is recorded does not warrant such a remark; and when we reflect upon the various circumstances and moral reasons which appear to have led to miracles, the object of the one in question does not make it in any proper sense anomalous.

PART THIRD.

MIRACLES ON HIS OWN BODY.

THERE yet remain two events which ought to have a place in this course of study, viz: The Transfiguration and the Resurrection of Jesus.

§ I. *The Transfiguration of Christ.* Matthew xvii. 1-13; Mark ix. 2-13; Luke ix. 28-36; (cf. II. Peter i. 16-18, and John i. 14.)

(a) These accounts are in no respect contradictory. Matthew and Mark, it has been said, place the transfiguration "six days" after a certain event (say the noble confession of Peter), while Luke puts it "about eight days" after the same event. But, to say nothing of the vagueness of Luke's statement, the first two evangelists probably give the number of days between the events, and Luke includes those on which they took place. Again: The evangelists differ from one another as to

the title which Peter gave to Christ. Matthew writes κύριε, Mark *Rabbi*, and Luke ἐπιστάτα. But there is here no difference in the meaning. Mark probably gives the Aramaic term used by Peter, while Matthew and Luke translated it by two words substantially equivalent. It is a striking instance of unity in variety. There are many other differences between the third gospel and the other two, but they involve no disagreement, and merely serve to evince the independence of the several writers, increasing the value of their testimony.

(b) The accounts agree in every essential point. For they testify in common: (1.) that about one week had elapsed since a given event, (2.) when Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him and went up into a mountain; (3.) that he was there transfigured before them, (4.) his face becoming radiant with light as the sun, (5.) and his garments white as snow; (6.) that Moses and Elias at the same time appeared to them, (7.) talking with Jesus; (8.) that Peter addressed the Saviour, saying: (9.) "Master, it is good for us to be here; (10.) let us make three tents, (11.) one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias," (12.) when a cloud overshadow-

owed them, and (13.) a voice proceeded from the cloud, saying: (14.) "this is my beloved Son; (15.) hear ye him"; (16.) that thereupon the disciples looked around and saw Jesus only, and (17.) that they did not at that time report what they had seen.

(c) According to Neander, the transfiguration may have been a purely subjective phenomenon: "The disciples, worn out with fatigue, fell asleep while Jesus was praying, and the impressions made by his prayer and their previous conversation with him were reflected in a vision. At length their slumbers were disturbed, and, in a half-waking condition, they saw and heard what followed." This view of the event is professedly drawn from the narrative of Luke, but it is hardly supported, much less required, by that narrative. Besides, it is difficult to believe that the phenomenon, if purely psychological, could have been the same in all. To remove this difficulty, Neander conjectured that only Peter reported the event. But this appears to be incompatible with the differences between the several accounts. Moreover, the first two evangelists testify explicitly that "Jesus was transfigured before them;" the change was

in him. They also mention that Jesus "charged his disciples not to make known what they had seen, until he was risen from the dead." Luke does not mention this charge, but he remarks that "they were silent, and reported to no one in those days anything of what they had seen," a statement which is perfectly explained by the charge referred to. And, finally, Luke himself appears to say that the transfiguration was witnessed by the disciples awake. Alford translates *διαγρηγορήσαντες*, *having kept awake*, and remarks: "The word is expressly used to show that it was *not merely a vision* seen in sleep." This is true even if we translate: "And awaking they saw his glory," etc.

(*d*) Paulus represents the transfiguration as objective, and at the same time natural. While Jesus was praying the disciples fell asleep. During their sleep, he went farther up the mountain and was joined by two strangers. By the sound of voices the sleepers were at length awakened, and just then the rays of the morning sun fell on the person of Jesus, and seemed to cover him with celestial glory. Presently a cloud gathered round him, and at the moment some

one uttered the words: "This is my beloved Son." A truly wonderful exposition! Why then did Jesus charge his disciples not to tell what they had seen? And how did they fix upon Moses and Elias as the companions of Jesus? And how could Jesus, with his wonderful insight and power to detect the thoughts of man, fail to notice and correct the mistake of his disciples? Such an imputation not only sets aside the plain meaning of the text, but assails the moral integrity of Christ.

(e) Strauss appeals to those passages of the Old Testament which speak of God as clothed with light; of the face of Moses as shining when he came down from the mount (Ex. xxxiv. 29, sq.); of the feet of those on the *mountains* who bring glad tidings (Is. lii. 7); and of the coming of Elias (Mal. iv. 5), as uniting to produce this legend. It was felt, he conjectures, that the face, and indeed the whole person of the Messiah, must at some time and in some place be covered with supernatural glory. The fittest time for this would be a little before his death, and the fittest place a mountain. So out of these materials was gradually formed the myth

which reads like history in the gospels. This interpretation is incompatible with the perfect simplicity of the gospel narratives, and with the striking harmony in diversity which they exhibit. Besides, there are no good reasons for denying the historical truth of the text.

By what means the disciples identified Moses and Elias we are not informed; perhaps it was by something in their conversation, possibly it was by the testimony of Jesus afterwards. As to the form of their manifestation, Luke remarks that it was "in glory;" but whether in their glorified bodies, having already, by way of anticipation and exception, entered upon their final state, or in temporary and miraculous forms of light, is not determined by the text. The former may very well be supposed of Elias, who was borne up into heaven in a chariot of fire, but not so well of Moses, who died and was buried. Hence it has been conjectured that Elias, appearing in his glorified body, was more conspicuous than Moses in whatever visible splendor he was clad, and that this distinction is intimated by the turn of expression found in Mark: "There appeared

unto them Elias with Moses;" but the foundation for such a conjecture in the language of Mark is evidently precarious.

The chief purpose of the transfiguration was, for the time being, to strengthen the faith of the disciples in the Divine Nature of Jesus. For a week they had been left to ponder his words respecting his approaching death, to think of his feeble humanity about to fall beneath the strokes of unsparing hatred, and now they were permitted to have a glimpse of his glory; for he was ever accustomed to offset a special revelation of his human nature by a special revelation of his Divine. He was the image and representative of God as well as of man—the God-man.

§ II. *The resurrection of Jesus from the dead.*

Matt. xxviii. 1, sq.; Mark xvi. 1, sq.; Luke xxiv. 1, sq.; John xx. 1, sq.; 1 Cor. xv. 1, sq.

This event, we know, is generally ascribed to God the Father, e. g. Gal. i. 1. But the Father's action does not exclude that of the Son. Whatever is done by any one person of the Adorable Trinity, is done in conjunc-

tion with, not in separation from, the other persons. "It remaineth therefore," says Bishop Pearson, ("On the Creed," p. 390,) "that Christ by that power which he had within himself, did take his life again which he had laid down, did reunite his soul unto his body from which he had separated it when he gave up the ghost, and so did quicken and revive himself: and so it is a certain truth, not only that God the Father raised the Son, but also that God the Son raised himself." (See John ii. 19-22; x. 17, 18; and cf. John v. 21; Romans i. 4.)

If, however, this event properly belongs to our course, it should without doubt be examined. For if Jesus Christ truly died and rose again, all his claims must be accepted as just, and every objection to the occurrence of miracles as such must be acknowledged futile. This stupendous event, proving him to be what he professed to be, the Son of God, not only furnishes a sample of the strictly miraculous, but even makes it probable that other miracles signalized his earthly course. On the other hand, to disprove the resurrection of Jesus, were it possible, would be to undermine the whole structure of Chris-

tianity. "If Christ be not risen," writes an apostle, "then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." To deny the possibility of miracles is to deny the resurrection of Christ and to reject the Christian religion.

The reality of Christ's death will hardly at the present day be called in question by any one who admits the general truthfulness of the gospels. For we have in effect the testimony of those who refrained from breaking the limbs of Jesus because he was already dead, although, to make assurance doubly sure, a spear was thrust into his side; we have also, in effect, the testimony of those who had sought his death with implacable rancor, and who would have given themselves no rest till they knew it to be accomplished, for they were anxious to prevent a secret removal of his body, but did not whisper a suspicion of his being still alive; we have still further the evidence afforded by his lying in the tomb two nights and a day; and, lastly, we have the direct assertion of all the evangelists that he verily gave up the ghost and died. Besides, if he was stolen away from the tomb and animation restored by natural means, what became of him after-

wards? where did he live? when and how did he die? and whence his moral power over his disciples to the end of their lives?

Owing to their Jewish ideas of the Messiah, the disciples of Christ were unable to receive beforehand his predictions of his own death. By his crucifixion, therefore, they were not only perplexed and intimidated, but utterly dejected. When he reappeared to them in the body, they were unwilling to accept any evidence but that of their senses in identifying his person. Yet from that time onward to the close of their lives, they bore unanimous testimony, with firmness and joy, to his death and resurrection,—especially to the latter, for of the former no doubt appears to have been entertained by either friend or foe. How shall this change from deep dejection to heroic faith be accounted for in the disciples? “Had Jesus appeared among them* sick and suffering, as he must have done if restored by natural means from apparent death, such a sight could not have revived their sunken faith, or become the foundation for all their hopes.”¹ If it be said that Jesus came back to his disciples

* 1 Neander's *Life of Christ*, p. 426.

from the tomb weak and suffering, and, to their knowledge, died soon after like other men from the effect of injuries received, it must also be admitted that, having lost all confidence in him as the true Messiah, they yet devoted themselves to a life of peril, falsehood, and merited reproach for the honor of his name. If it be assumed that Jesus reappeared to the disciples in a natural way, but soon after withdrew himself from them and died in secret, it must also be conceded that one whom they have described as being free from sin was a consummate hypocrite and impostor, that their testimony in respect to his ascension was a deliberate lie, and their career of heroic labor for the spread of his doctrine a fruit of blind ambition or self-will. Or if it be supposed that Jesus appeared thus to them, and was at length restored to perfect health, so that he lived many years, the same consequences as to his character and that of his disciples must follow ; and it must also be allowed that all traces, however faint, of this later life of Christ upon earth were utterly concealed by his crafty followers. *Credat Judæus Apella !*

The conduct of the Jewish rulers in seal-

ing up the sepulchre, setting a guard over it, and bribing that guard to testify falsely, also merits attention. It is easy to believe that the chief priests and Pharisees had heard of Christ's expectation of rising from the dead on the third day,¹ and were anxious to make sure work and guard against any pretence of its fulfilment. Admitting this, it is likewise easy to believe that they desired to have persons who were under their influence on the spot, to prevent a removal of the body, or, in case it should be actually reanimated, to bear such witness as suited their purpose. And if the resurrection took place in reality, it is natural to suppose they would press these persons to admit, for a consideration, that they had fallen asleep, and that while they were asleep the body, as they might profess to know by indications within and about the sepulchre, had been stolen away,—of course by the disciples. Nor is it surprising that Pilate should have been willing, for many reasons, to accept the report and wink at the unfaithfulness of the watch. The entire narrative is eminently credible.

¹ Matt. xii. 40; xvi. 21; xvii. 23; xx. 19.

Moreover, "St. Matthew, by the concurrent testimony of all antiquity, wrote his gospel for the use of the Hebrews particularly; and this story of guarding the sepulchre, being an evidence of the completion of a prophecy given to that nation in particular, seems to be the reason why he relates it so punctually. And since one evangelist only has mentioned this circumstance of guarding the sepulchre, how providential was it that we have the account in that gospel, which was written for the Jews particularly? When this gospel was published, there were thousands living in that country who knew and could inform others of the circumstances reported by St. Matthew; and is it credible that St. Matthew would have published this account, if false, in Judea itself, where it must undoubtedly have been detected?" "That St. Matthew reports this story, and the other evangelists omit it, is not a singular case. The massacre of the infants by Herod is reported by St. Matthew only, and for the same reason; because it was a fact of peculiar moment to the Jews, as it showed the sense of the nation in expecting the Messiah at the very time when Christ was born, as

it was the completion of a prophecy set forth in their own Scriptures, and as it was a fact that happened at their own door, in which they could not be imposed on.”¹ The watch was set by the Pharisees “on the day after the preparation,” that is, on Saturday, and probably near the close of the day. We may therefore be sure that at that time the rulers ascertained the presence of the body in the tomb, and that the death of Jesus had been so thoroughly verified as to render any thought of his restoration by natural means impossible.

“He was crucified, dead and buried.” Here ends the natural, or, as we have styled it, the ordinarily credible, in the history of Christ. “When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished; and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.” The soldier had pierced his side to ascertain that he was unmistakably dead. “He who saw it had borne witness” in his own loving and mourning memory to the never to be forgotten event. The rich friend of Arimathea had begged the body of Pilate, and taken it down from the cross. The honorable friend, Nicodemus, de-

¹ *Sherlock's Works*, Vol. V. p. 274.

sponding but no longer afraid, had brought his aromatic mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pounds weight. "Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen cloths, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre wherein was never man laid. Here laid they Jesus, therefore, because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand." Who can doubt this? What motive to doubt it? What reason to doubt it that would not involve in skepticism every narration of a death and burial ever given to the world? As well doubt that Socrates drank the poisoned cup, or that Washington was interred at Mount Vernon. . . . Does a shade of skepticism cross the Christian mind, we know of no better prescription for such a disease than this: Take up the book and read the story of the crucifixion. There is no need of retouching the picture. Nothing can add to the divine limning of the scene as presented by the evangelists. Thus far, we venture to say, no sane mind can have any more doubt of its reality than of any

event of yesterday narrated by the most authentic of human testimony.”¹

In considering the evidence of his resurrection from the dead we remark, (a) that no real contradictions appear in the testimony. As to the time when the women first visited the tomb on the morning of the resurrection, the evangelists seem to disagree. Matthew says that they came “as it was dawning into the first day of the week.” Luke, that they came “very early in the morning.” John, that Mary Magdalene came “early, when it was yet dark”; and Mark, that they came “very early, when the sun was risen.” The words of John are said to contradict those of Mark; but if we assume, which is not strictly necessary, that both refer to the time when the women reached the tomb, it will be unreasonable to assert a contradiction. For while John says it was “early” (πρωί) in the morning, Mark says it was “very early,” (λίαν πρωί), and we may therefore conclude that his words, “when the sun was risen,” do not probably refer to a later hour than those of John, “when it was

¹ Taylor Lewis, *The Divine Human in the Scriptures*, pp. 289, 296, 297.

yet dark." They came at early dawn, when the darkness of night was passing through twilight into day. If this be thought inconsistent with Mark's language, he must be said to disagree not only with the other evangelists, but also with himself. But Dr. Robinson has shown, we think, that the expression "when the sun was risen" is sometimes used to signify the early dawn or morning twilight. "As the sun is the source of light and day, and his earliest rays produce the contrast between night and dawn, so the term *sun-rising* came in popular usage, by a metonymy of cause for effect, to be put for all that earlier interval, when his rays still struggling with darkness do yet usher in the day (cf. Jud. ix. 33; Ps. civ. 22; 2 Kings iii. 22; 2 Sam. xxiii. 4)." But it is also possible that Mark refers by the words "very early," to the time when the women started from their lodgings to repair to the tomb, and by the words "when the sun was risen," to the time when they were all assembled at the tomb. This interpretation is defended at length by Gilbert West, in his treatise on the "Resurrection of Christ," and it is far more reasonable than the hypothesis of a contra-

diction between the several accounts. Indeed, we do not see how it can be made to appear improbable, much less absurd.

We forbear to examine in detail the other supposed contradictions. For they all rest upon the assumption that each writer undertook to give a complete account of Christ's appearances to his disciples. But there is nothing whatever in the gospels, fairly interpreted, to warrant this assumption, while there is very much to prove it false. Not only the obvious consideration that no history or biography can be exhaustive, but also the whole structure of the gospels and the express declaration of John, make it certain that the evangelists did not intend to relate all the events of our Saviour's life. Each one included in his narrative such and so many of those events as were requisite to place before the minds of his particular readers a truthful image of the Redeemer's character and work.

(b) That Jesus, according to the testimony here given, showed himself alive to his disciples after his crucifixion. Passing over for the present the witness of the angels, let us examine the evidence for his appearing on

several different occasions to his friends. (1.)
To Mary Magdalene. It appears that she went very early in the morning with other women to the sepulchre, and seeing it open, inferred that the body of Jesus had been removed. Without stopping to enter the tomb with her companions, she ran hastily into the city to notify Peter and John of what had been seen. These two disciples in turn ran swiftly to the tomb, and were followed, doubtless, at a slower pace, by Mary. Meanwhile the other women had entered the sepulchre, seen the vision of angels, and gone, perhaps, by another way, into the city to find some of the twelve. Having carefully examined the tomb, noting the position of the linen clothes and the folded napkin, Peter and John went away, but Mary lingered on the spot weeping, and as she looked into the sepulchre, saw two angels in white. Abandoned to grief, and thinking only of her Saviour, the sight did not terrify her, but answering their question, "Woman, why weep-est thou?" "Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him," she turned, to behold Jesus himself standing near. At first she did not recognize

him even by his voice, but when he uttered her name, the well-known accents could not be mistaken, and she cried, Rabboni, casting herself perhaps with unutterable emotion at his feet. For some reason Jesus would not then permit her to detain him; whether she actually embraced his feet in the ecstasy of her joy and love is not determined by the text; but she was sent with a message to the disciples. Now it is observable that the conduct of Mary, as thus represented, was natural and consistent throughout. She had been forgiven much and therefore loved much. Hence her grief was passionate and absorbing. She concluded that the body of Jesus had been taken away by his enemies from the tomb, and not a thought of his resurrection entered her mind. Only when his well-remembered voice pronounced her name was her mistake corrected, and the person who stood before her recognized by an "infallible proof" as her risen Lord. In such a case as this the sense of hearing was even surer than that of sight, and could not well be deceived.

(2.) *To other women.* These had left the sepulchre, it would seem, when Peter and

John reached it; but how long before cannot be ascertained. Nor do we know how long the two apostles were at the tomb, or how long Mary was there after they left before Jesus appeared to her. All this may have taken place in a brief period, while the other women were yet on their way to the remaining disciples in a distant part of the city. Hence Jesus, who no longer subjected his movements to the ordinary laws of nature, "met them, saying, all hail! and they came and held him by the feet and worshipped him." Soon, however, they were dismissed with substantially the same message to the disciples which had been given already to Mary Magdalene.

In this instance it will be noted that the sense of hearing was addressed by the risen Saviour as well as the sense of sight, and both of them served to identify his person. A third sense was applied to verify the reality of his body. Moreover, the witnesses were several in number. So many senses of so many persons were not likely to be deceived. Nor was the phenomenon thus attested mental and subjective. Against this view the number of persons is decisive; for

the very same hallucination would not have seized them all at once, especially as they had no reason to expect a manifestation of their Lord at that time.

(3.) *To the Apostle Peter.* This is mentioned by Paul, who says that "Christ died for our sins and rose again, that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve." Luke also declares that when the two disciples returned from Emmaus they found the eleven gathered together saying, "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon." The testimony of this apostle was of such a nature as to be credited by his fellow apostles, although they had distrusted the accounts of the women; but whether their faith was due to the character of Peter as a witness, or to the particulars which he gave of Christ's interview with him, we are unable to say.

(4.) *To Cleopas and another disciple.* The evangelists do not write as men who are afraid of being disbelieved. They evidently make it a point to state the simple truth, so far as they go, whether it be liable to perversion or not. The narrative before us illustrates this remark. It did not convince the disciples, when they first heard it, that Jesus

had really appeared to Cleopas and his companion. Some of the details were as perplexing to them as to us. Yet the narrative is given without apology or explanation. The evangelists are content to let it speak for itself. Mark simply testifies that Jesus "appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked and went into the country." But Luke describes the scene at length, saying that as Cleopas and another disciple were going to Emmaus Jesus joined them in the way and opened to them the Scriptures, yet "their eyes were holden that they should not know him." Afterwards, in the breaking of bread, "their eyes were opened and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight." Perhaps his countenance and the tones of his voice were somewhat changed after his resurrection, but not to such a degree as to prevent recognition, when carefully observed by those who knew him well, and therefore by the power of Christ "their eyes were holden" until he saw fit to be recognized. Then he withdrew his miraculous restraint on their sight, and, it may be, employed the very tones of voice and gestures of benediction which he had been wont to

use on similar occasions before his decease. When now the recognition was complete, and they knew that Jesus had appeared to them—he was gone from their sight. “Although the lateness of their recognition may appear strange,” says Neander, “the *time* of it—just at the repetition of an accustomed habit—is entirely natural. There is not even a mystical feature about it, in itself considered.” And the circumstance that for a time these two disciples did not know the person of Christ is no proof that they were mistaken afterwards. Nay, it should rather lead to an opposite conclusion, for it must have made them doubt the evidence of their senses, unless that evidence had been positive and indubitable. To destroy the force of their testimony one must prove the record of Luke to be unworthy of confidence; for the events, however mysterious, attested by that record, require for their explanation the fact that “Jesus himself,” and no other being, whether human or angelic, appeared to Cleopas and his fellow disciple. There seems to be no sufficient reason for supposing that he partook of any food at this time. Indeed the language of Luke is unfavorable to such a

view, and we may probably say without rashness that he ate nothing with the two disciples.

(5.) *To the apostles, Thomas being absent.* It was now evening, and Jesus had already, during the day, manifested himself four times to his followers. Those whom he had joined on their way to Emmaus came back at once to the city, and found the apostles assembled with their friends, speaking of Christ's appearance to Simon. The doors being shut for fear of the Jews, the two disciples began to describe the Saviour's interview with them, but though Peter had been believed, their testimony was heard with distrust. Just then Jesus himself stood in the midst of this astonished group, and said: "Peace be unto you!" Reproving them for their unbelief and hardness of heart in not receiving the testimony of those who had seen him since the morning, he showed them his hands and feet, and suffered them to handle these that they might identify him beyond a doubt; he reminded them that a spirit had not flesh and bones as they perceived him to have, and he called for food which he ate before them. Skepticism was no longer possible, and

the disciples rejoiced at the sight of their risen Lord.

In the wise providence of God, all the apostles were suffered to become disheartened and distrustful. The death of Christ had destroyed their fondest hopes, and in their grief and despondency they seem to have forgotten his announcement of a speedy resurrection. The words which he had spoken to them on this point were strangely dark to their minds, and, notwithstanding his attempts to forewarn them, his death and resurrection took them completely by surprise. But their dulness and unbelief were permitted for our profit. Such evidence was necessary to convince them, as leaves skepticism without excuse for all time. They were slow to believe, that we might have no reason to doubt. Hence Jesus now appeared to a company of disciples who knew him well, permitting them to see his face, to hear his voice, to examine the print of the nails in his flesh, to handle his body, and verify its reality, and to behold him eating before them. He also reminded them of his own words in the past, and explained to them the Scriptures. It is difficult for us to conceive of any better evidence which could

have been given to them of his resurrection. They were unable longer to doubt, and equally impossible will it be for us to do so, unless we deny the historical credibility of these accounts. Such a denial must rest, in the end, upon the *a priori* assumption that miracles are absurd, and revelation impossible, while this again falls back upon Atheism or Pantheism for its only support.

(6.) *To the apostles, Thomas being present.* When Thomas was informed by the other apostles that they had seen the Lord, as just described, he replied: "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and thrust my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Here was skepticism sufficiently stubborn; yet for wise reasons Jesus condescended to remove it, even in the way prescribed by this unbelieving disciple. For one week later (on the next Lord's Day), when the disciples were assembled together, with Thomas, the doors being shut, Jesus stood again in the midst of them, and said: "Peace be unto you!" Then saith he to Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless,

but believing." And Thomas answered and said unto him: "My Lord and my God!" Jesus saith unto him: "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen and have believed!" The same remarks are applicable to this as to the preceding manifestation of Jesus to his disciples. The history must be rejected, or the certainty of Christ's resurrection must be admitted. But the rejection of the gospels as history is impossible, except from the atheistic or pantheistic standpoint.

(7.) *To seven apostles in Galilee.* We have already spoken of this interview in considering the second miraculous draught of fishes. We then had occasion to notice the change in Christ's way of living and holding intercourse with his followers after his resurrection; the fact that he was wont to appear to them suddenly and mysteriously; that his body seemed to be wholly subject, not miraculously, but according to the laws of a higher economy, to the spirit; and that in this respect his appearance to the seven at the lake of Tiberias was in perfect harmony with all his earlier manifestations. This coincidence was noted as a sign of truth. It

must, however, be carefully borne in mind that his body was real, material, having flesh and bones, as before the crucifixion. Hence it could be identified by the natural senses of those who had been familiar with him for three years. However easily he could withdraw himself from view, it was morally impossible for him to deceive their senses by presenting an unreal, unsubstantial body to them *as real*. And in the present case our Saviour's conversation with Peter, his thrice repeated question: "Lovest thou me?" and his thrice repeated charge: "Feed my lambs" (or sheep), gave them the fullest opportunity to identify his person, and render mistake impossible.

(8.) *To the apostles and above five hundred brethren in Galilee.* Matthew testifies that the eleven went in Galilee into a mountain, where Jesus had directed them to meet, and that then "they saw and worshipped him; but some doubted." The last statement suggests that others besides the eleven were present; for all these had seen the Saviour twice at least, and had been fully convinced of his resurrection. Paul supplies a fact which explains this clause, if, as seems altogether

probable, the five hundred and upwards, whom he mentions as having seen Jesus at one time after his resurrection, were present at this appointed meeting. That it was an appointed meeting, on a particular mountain, certainly favors the hypothesis that it was intended for the disciples of that region generally, and not for the apostles merely. Adopting this view, it is very interesting to observe how the statement of Paul incidentally and undesignedly throws light upon that of Matthew; for it cannot surely be strange that of these five hundred some doubted. It was the first time they had seen the Lord since his resurrection, and many of them had not, in all probability, as yet heard the details of apostolic testimony respecting his earlier appearances. We say "undesignedly," for it must be obvious to every one that Paul had no thought of confirming or explaining the words of Matthew, otherwise he would have identified by some direct reference the appearance of which he wrote with that described in the first gospel. He does, however, distinctly affirm that "the greater part" of the more than five hundred brethren by whom Jesus was seen at one time were still alive when he was writing his

first letter to the Corinthians, and could therefore bear witness to the truth of his record. This is a point which the apostle might well notice at that time.

(9.) *To James, (the Lord's brother?)* For a knowledge of this fact we are also indebted to the Apostle Paul, but he gives no description of the interview. Indeed, we are not perfectly certain to which of the persons called James he alludes, but he probably meant to signify the one who was, when Paul wrote, bishop of the church at Jerusalem; for his readers would be more likely to think of this James than of any other. Nor is it possible to determine the place where Jesus manifested himself to James, whether in Jerusalem or in Galilee; most interpreters think it was in Jerusalem.

(10.) *To all the apostles.*¹ The apostles were now in Jerusalem, and Jesus appears to have met them for the purpose of renewing to them his promise of the Holy Spirit, and of charging them to remain in the holy city until this promise was fulfilled. The notices of this interview are very brief, and we have no reason to suppose it was occasioned by

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 7; Acts i. 4, 5; cf. Luke xxiv. 49.

any lingering doubt in the minds of the apostles as to his resurrection. It was rather granted them for their comfort and instruction.

(11.) *To all the apostles.* Luke mentions that, having come together, they inquired of Jesus if he was about to restore *at that time* the kingdom to Israel; thus intimating their "expectation that his kingdom would be, to some extent, a temporal one." Jesus replies: "It is not for you to know the times or occasions which the Father fixed in his own power;" but he promised them once more, through the descent of the Holy Spirit, strength for the work assigned them, and added: "Ye shall be my witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Meanwhile he led them forth to the neighborhood of Bethany, and, while their eyes were upon him, and he was blessing them, was taken up into the air, and a cloud received him out of their sight. But as they were gazing towards heaven, two men stood beside them in white raiment, and asserted that Jesus had now gone up into heaven, from which he would, in like manner, return hereafter.

Of the evangelists only Mark and Luke

describe the ascension of Christ, but Peter not only speaks of him as "exalted by the right hand of God, and ascended into heaven" (Acts ii. 33, 34), but also insists that no one could be an apostle unless he had been with the disciples all the time that the Lord went in and out among them, from the baptism of John unto that same day when "he was taken up" from them (Acts i. 21, 22); and Paul describes the Saviour as one whom "God had raised from the dead, and set at his own right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. vi. 21); while John puts on record his words to Mary Magdalene: "Go to my brethren, and say to them, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.'" But it is needless to seek for evidence on this point, since no one at the present day will be so inconsistent as to deny the ascension of Christ while conceding the fact of his resurrection. If Jesus rose from the dead, according to his prediction, he also, beyond any doubt, ascended into heaven, and "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

(12.) *To the Apostle Paul.* In proof of this we have the testimony of Paul himself: "Last

of all he was seen of me also" (1 Cor. xv. 8, cf. ix. 1; Acts xix, 17-27; xxii. 14; also xxii. 18). Such, doubtless, was the appearance of Christ to this apostle as to afford decisive evidence of his being in reality Jesus of Nazareth. Yet his body was already glorified: it seems to us, therefore, that Paul's testimony goes to prove that our "spiritual bodies" hereafter will bear some perceptible likeness to our present bodies. If so, they may facilitate the recognition of earthly friends in the world to come.

In view of the records already considered, it is not surprising that Luke asserts that he "showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs" to his chosen disciples, "during forty days appearing to them."¹ Says

¹ Acts i. 3, compare xiii. 31. "Who appeared for many days to those who came up with him from Galilee into Jerusalem." "The witnesses are men who had previously lived in familiar and intimate intercourse with Jesus; they had gone up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. It was impossible, therefore, that they could be deceived as to the identity of his person. Further, he had not merely appeared to them, and then vanished away forever, but he had shown himself to them for many days." (Baumgarten, *Apostolic History*, Vol. I. p. 426, Eng. trans.) This statement of the apostle does not require us to suppose that Jesus was with his disciples *continuously* for many days, but only occasionally, as the evangelists and Paul himself (1 Cor. xv. 1, sq.) represent.

Professor Hackett: "The language seems to show that the first Christians had distinctly revolved the question, whether the Saviour's resurrection was real or not, and had assured themselves of its reality by evidence which did not admit in their minds of the shadow of a doubt." We do not see how the evidence could have been made more satisfactory to us. No valid objections have ever been urged against it. Professor Lewis refers to the testimony before us in the following strain: "What can be more truthful than the manner of narration, and what more incredible than that it should have been so told by men who knew that it was all a lying picture, whose most minute and tender touches would, on such a supposition, be the grossest of all mendacities? To think of *such* a story, and *so* told, by men who had stolen their Master's lifeless body, and knew that it was lying concealed somewhere, a decomposing corpse! To think of such truthful simplicity, such enthusiasm, such earnestness, such courage, such elevated thought, such holy emotion, such a heavenly life of love, such martyr deaths coming from such a source!—of so much unearthly vitality, in short, proceeding

from a mouldering death; so much spiritual splendor from the darkness of a hopeless grave; so much heavenly truth, or truth that seems so heavenly, from known lies,—so revolting to any pure conscience, so alien to all elevated hope, so inconsistent with any moral heroism, so utterly destructive of any martyr spirit, of any soul-sustaining faith! Incredible, most incredible!”¹

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

HAVING now completed our survey of the records of Christ's miracles, we submit a few thoughts on the testimony which they afford.

The number of witnesses is ample. The testimony would be scarcely more convincing were this number greater. Several of the miracles (six) are related by two of the evangelists, a still larger number (twelve) by three of them, and two, at least, by four of them. Moreover, such is the character of these miracles, so many traits of moral likeness do they exhibit, that whoever admits the reality of those recorded by two or three of the evan-

¹ *The Divine Human in the Scriptures*, pp. 303, 304.

gelists will have no hesitation in admitting the reality of all the rest. But Mark and Luke, it may be said, were not witnesses of the events which they describe. Perhaps not; yet their narratives give evidence of being no more than accurate records of testimony delivered by immediate witnesses. They were familiar with the personal attendants of Jesus, and had listened with deep interest and reverence to their accounts of his mighty works. Luke declares that his gospel is but a careful and orderly statement of what the eye-witnesses and servants of the word had reported; and the pages of Mark, to say nothing of early tradition, prove that he is giving the testimony of one who knew by direct observation whereof he affirmed. Besides, the miracles of Jesus were not wrought in a corner. They were performed in open day, and often in public places. In every instance several witnesses were present, and therefore neither Mark nor Luke could have the slightest difficulty in ascertaining from more than one eye-witness the particulars of each miracle.

The integrity of these witnesses is also above suspicion. No trace of a sinister pur-

pose appears in their writings. They put on record the humble origin, the mysterious temptation, and the hard sayings of Jesus. They describe his agony in the garden, his faintness under the cross, and his dreadful cry at the withdrawal of his Father's presence. And they utter no word in explanation or in extenuation of such facts. It was clearly no part of their aim to make a hero of their Master, to eulogize his character, his works, or his words. A sacred reverence for his person pervades their narratives, and they venture neither to praise, to expound, nor to criticize his teachings. So, too, they put on record their own mistakes and follies and sins, their prejudice, ambition, unbelief. Very distinct, yet by no means flattering, is the portrait which they have sketched of themselves; yet so intent were they on the one purpose of their writing, viz.: to embalm the precious words of Jesus and the leading events of his ministry, that they seem never to bring themselves to notice, except in so far as this was necessary in giving a history of Christ. Besides, what motive could lead deceivers and impostors, while endeavoring to foist a spurious revelation on mankind, to make the moral

character of their religion so pure, the life which it enjoins so holy, the sanctions enforcing love and mercy so terrible? Can a clean thing come out of an unclean? Or what advantage could they hope to reap in this life, or in that which is to come, by such falsehood, arraying themselves against kindred and friends, God and honesty, to honor a blasphemer or enthusiast who had died ignominiously? The integrity of the evangelists cannot be questioned or denied by any sane man.

Furthermore, the powers of observation and memory possessed by these witnesses were excellent. For they narrate with singular clearness and vividness. The events which they describe seem often to be taking place before our eyes. The persons whom they introduce speak out their characters and live in our presence. And the words which they record are in keeping with the various speakers and circumstances. Every clause tells. Narratives so brief could not well be more graphic. They are too abrupt, concise, and full of thought to be fictitious; too natural and lifelike to be legends. The writers do not waver, hesitate, or modify, as if uncertain

about the precise fact; but they speak freely, positively, and to the point, as men who know the certainty of what they affirm. No writers in any age have given better evidence of careful observation and distinct recollection. When they wrote these memoirs of Jesus, their mental vision seems to have been perfectly clear, without the slightest mist or haze. "It is found indispensable," says Greenleaf, "as a test of truth, and to the proper administration of justice, that every living witness should, if possible, be subjected to the ordeal of a cross-examination, that it may appear—what were his powers of perception, his opportunities for observation, his attentiveness in observing, the strength of his recollection, and his disposition to speak the truth." So far as it is possible to test the character of witnesses by scrutinizing and comparing their written testimony in regard to the same events, the evangelists have been thus tested by friends and foes, and no witnesses have been found worthy of higher confidence.

Again: The phenomena which they attest were sensible. They speak of what could be heard, or seen, or tasted, or handled. They set forth those events, and as a rule those

only, which fell under the notice of their senses. They propose no philosophy of miracles or of history; they undertake no explanation of spiritual powers or processes; they answer no curious questions of the speculative reason. "In its grand, childlike, and holy simplicity, the narrative passes by such questions of the intellect, just as a child moves among the riddles of nature and of life, as if they existed not." The special task of the evangelists was to report the words and acts of Jesus, with their manifest consequences, and this task they performed in the fittest manner conceivable. It is also worthy of notice, that when the evidence of a particular sense was requisite in order to verify any miracle, opportunity was never wanting to apply that sense. In this way were tested the wine at Cana, the bread for the multitudes, and the risen body of Christ.

Once more: their testimony as to these phenomena is positive. "The style of the evangelists indicates certain knowledge. It seems to say, with modest yet serene confidence: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables," but "that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands

have handled, declare we unto you." They do not write as men who are uncertain whether they know the facts or not. They "do not write as men who are fearful that their statements will be discredited," and therefore anxious to confirm them by heaping up evidence." They bear themselves as intelligent witnesses, whose duty is to state facts of which they are distinctly cognizant, and no more. They never venture beyond the sphere of vivid into that of dim recollection or uncertain conjectures. No philosophical reflections, no special pleadings, no gushes of emotion or flashes of indignation, no eulogies or apologies, mar the simplicity of the gospel narrative. With clearness, brevity, and dignity, do they relate the events of our Saviour's ministry, as facts too certain to be called in question by any honest mind, and too important to be exalted by any effort of human speech. Especially is this true of their accounts of the miracles wrought by Christ.

Again: the testimony of the evangelists is independent. They rarely, if ever, copy from one another. Indeed, the differences are so marked as to forbid the hypothesis of even a common traditional source, on which any two

of them were dependent. They are rather such as might be expected in case several witnesses of the same events were to describe them fully as presented to their observation. In the course of our study there has been frequent occasion to notice this feature of the gospel narrative. Wherever the same miracle has been described by different evangelists, the originality of each writer has been apparent. In all the minor details, as well as in the phraseology, there has been ample evidence of freedom and freshness. The bearing of this fact upon the value of these records as testimony is obvious. It makes each of them a separate witness, and the weight of their united voice irresistible. It shows the impossibility of mistake or collusion.

Their testimony, as we have seen, is also in substance harmonious. There is just such an agreement about essentials as might be anticipated in the evidence of persons who were accurately describing real events, each from his own point of view. The harmony is not verbal or formal, but substantial, pertaining to the main facts and moral features of the transaction; while the diversity is circumstantial, and never of such a kind as to evince

ignorance or prejudice. The union of these two characteristics in the sacred narrative is partially explained by admitting the occurrence of the miracles which they relate, and fully, we may add, by supposing the mental powers of the evangelists to have been exalted and guided by inspiration in making this record. But whether they were inspired or uninspired, the actual phenomena of their writings can never be accounted for without conceding the truth of what they say, and the working of many miracles by Christ.

Further: the miracles which the gospels describe were connected with the teaching of Jesus. They enter many times into the substance as well as the form of his discourses. Rend them away from their place in the record and many a precious message must go with them, for the latter could never have fallen from his lips of truth without the former. But this is not all. His miracles, according to the evangelical record, were closely connected with the words and conduct of his foes. Indeed, they enter into the very warp and woof of our Saviour's history. Remove them from the gospels, and the pieces which remain can be brought together and

made one by no mortal skill. One after another will be found worthless, until it becomes evident that by rejecting the miracles of Christ the whole gospel is condemned. No middle post is tenable; whoever is not for the evangelical record, miracles included, is against it; whoever does not welcome Christianity as a supernatural religion in origin and character, does not welcome it at all. The birth, the insight, the wisdom, the moral purity, and the matchless teaching of Christ, were all miraculous, no less so than his resurrection from the dead and his ascension into heaven.

Still further: the aim of Christ's miracles was godlike. They were revelations of goodness and incentives to faith. They opened a door for the entrance of spiritual life, or strengthened the confidence of weak disciples. They were outgoings of that spirit which pervades and characterizes the New Covenant, and some of them were emblematical of redemptive working in the kingdom of grace. The opening of the eyes of the blind symbolized, we cannot doubt, the higher act of imparting spiritual discernment; the cleansing of lepers was an emblem of purifying the

hearts of men from sin ; raising the dead was typical of a better resurrection hereafter ; and casting out demons foreshadowed the ultimate overthrow of Satan's kingdom. These are but specimens. Besides, no miracle was wrought to gratify a vain curiosity. No mighty work was performed for the sake of display, or to win human applause. His power was never exercised at the beck of captious men, nor his hand stretched forth to save himself from toil or reproach. His moral aim, both in miracles and teachings, was one ; and so godlike as to be on a plane with the greatest miracle, making the latter seem to be in perfect keeping with his whole life. "It is remarkable," says Prof. Harris, "that, however incredible the Scripture miracles would seem in any other book, we are never conscious of surprise, never regard them as incredible, incongruous, or unexpected, when we read of them in the Bible. The central thought, that this is the record of God's feelings and acts in saving men, is so vast, the truths opened to us are so stupendous, the scenes disclosed so sublime, every step in the progressing story is so manifestly the step of the Almighty, that these great miracles harmonize with the

grandeur of the whole revelation; they seem to us no more surprising or incredible than the rainbow with which God adorns the retiring storm, or the stars with which he nightly gems the sky."

In view of these characteristics of our Saviour's miracles, as attested by the evangelists, the mythical hypothesis is incredible. "The narratives bear every appearance of reality on their surface, and no skill or ingenuity can discover anything of a different character underneath the surface. The actors are real, the actions are real, the conversations, the discussions which accompany or rise out of the actions, and the proceedings which result from them, are real." When we reflect upon the references to natural scenery in the gospels, to particular mountains, hills, valleys, lakes, rivers, and pools; to natural productions,—as olives, vines, fig-trees, wheat, tares, mustard, lilies, and the like; to the works of man,—as houses, synagogues, boats, jars, baskets, beds, boxes, etc.; to the habits of the people, religious, social, or domestic, at home or abroad, as hosts or as guests, at weddings and funerals, on the Sabbath or at the feasts, as teachers, shepherds, or fishers; to the civil

divisions and relations of the country at that time, so numerous, complicated, and fluctuating; to rulers mentioned by name,—whether kings, tetrarchs, governors, procurators, centurions, publicans, and soldiers, or high-priests, priests, members of the Sanhedrim and rulers of the synagogues; to diseases prevalent in the land,—as fever, leprosy, blindness, palsy; and to the passions, prejudices, hopes, and fears of rulers and people;—if we reflect upon all these references and many more, remembering that in no single instance, however trifling, have the gospels been proved incorrect, while in hundreds and hundreds of the nicest details they are allowed to be most exact, it will be absolutely impossible for us to believe that these records were forged in the second century, and that their accounts of miracles wrought by Christ are legendary. Skepticism enforces a credulity which is truly monstrous to the sober reason of Christians; a credulity which is capable of but one explanation, namely, a resolve to dethrone reason sooner than accept Christ.

Finally: it is obvious that the evidential value of miracles is still very great. That it was so in the time of Christ and of the

apostles is certain from their own declarations. In passages too numerous for citation, Jesus appealed to his mighty works as proof of his Messiahship.¹ His disciples did the same.² So

¹ *E. g.* “And when the men were come unto him they said: John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? And in the same hour he cured many of infirmities and plagues and evil spirits, and to many blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way and tell John what ye have seen and heard; that blind see, lame walk, lepers are cleansed, deaf hear, dead are raised, poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is whosoever shall not be offended in me.” “I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.” “If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works.” “Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works’ sake.” “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin.” “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” — Luke vii. 20–23; John v. 36; x. 37, 38; xv. 24; Matt. xi. 21.

² *E. g.* “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.” “Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.” “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and

also did Nicodemus and the man who was born blind.¹ And even the bitter foes of Jesus could not agree in holding that a sinner, in league with Satan, could do all the mighty works ascribed to him.² Jesus and his contemporaries were right. Genuine miracles do ratify the claims of him at whose word they are wrought; for unless Divine he cannot work them himself, unless truthful God cannot be supposed to work them in his behalf. Miracles are the appropriate credentials of a messenger from God, and when properly attested they are decisive. Such were those of Jesus, and whatever value they may have had as revelations of other truth, they taught

healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly.”—John xx. 30, 31; Acts ii. 22; x. 38-40.

¹ “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.” “Since the world began was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God he could do nothing.”—John. iii. 2; ix. 32, 33.

² “Therefore said some of the Pharisees, this man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner, do such miracles? And there was a division among them.”—John ix. 16.

and established this beyond a question, that He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. For us they do the same, inasmuch as the evidence of their reality is incontestible.

But our Saviour's miracles deserve to be studied, not only as credentials of his Messiahship, but also as revelations of his spirit. They were spontaneous workings of his theanthropic life. They expressed by emphatic action his moral nature, and foreshadowed the principles and laws of his spiritual administration. As the image of the invisible God, and the representative of perfect manhood, he gave free play while on earth to the wisdom, the holiness, the love, and the compassion of his entire being, and his mighty deeds united with his sacred words in making known to men his true character.

How many indications of wisdom have appeared in our brief course of study! His reply to the hint of his mother, in Cana; his momentary repulse of the Syro-Phoenician woman; his unsolicited cures on the Sabbath day; his refusal to answer the captious demand of the Pharisees for a sign from heaven; his effort to shun notoriety as a mere worker of miracles; his tarrying in Perea two days

after being notified of the sickness of Lazarus; — these and many other instances illustrate his wisdom in dealing with the men whom he met in his labors. He was master of occasions and circumstances; he read with perfect eye the characters of those with whom he had to deal; he recognized with infallible certainty the moral conditions which called for miraculous action; he finished in every case the particular work which he saw fit to begin; and, though surrounded by treacherous foes, he passed with unwavering step along his chosen way.

Not less marked are the indications of his holiness. It was his meat and drink to do his Father's will and reveal his Father's character. Not for himself, therefore, for his own comfort or glory, did he put forth the energy of his divine nature, but for the cause of truth and of piety, for the moral renovation of man and the glory of his Father. By healing the body he sought to restore the soul and lead it back to fellowship with God. Hence the moral conditions without which he could not do mighty works. Hence his language to the nobleman, and the fewness of his miracles in Nazareth. The same moral

perfection was manifested also by his readiness to cast out demons. Though shunning all vain display of power, he was ever prompt to eject evil spirits from the seat of their usurped control over the bodies of men, and to repel with loathing their malicious forwardness in acknowledging his mission.

Still more conspicuous are the signs of his love. They have met us at every point in this examination. Narrative after narrative, from first to last, has offered fresh and signal proofs of the Saviour's benevolence. All his works were in harmony with the great purpose of his incarnation; they were deeds of grace and not of judgment; they were born of love and not of wrath. For he came to seek and to save the lost, and his miracles were an integral part of his work, drawing some to himself, and opening to them the gates of life. Many who were conscious of sin, and scarcely ventured to lift up their eyes to him for aid, obtained mercy and went their way in peace. To specify all the mighty works by which the love of Christ was revealed, would be to go over again almost the whole list of miracles recorded in the gospels.

And, in the last place, evidences of sym-
•

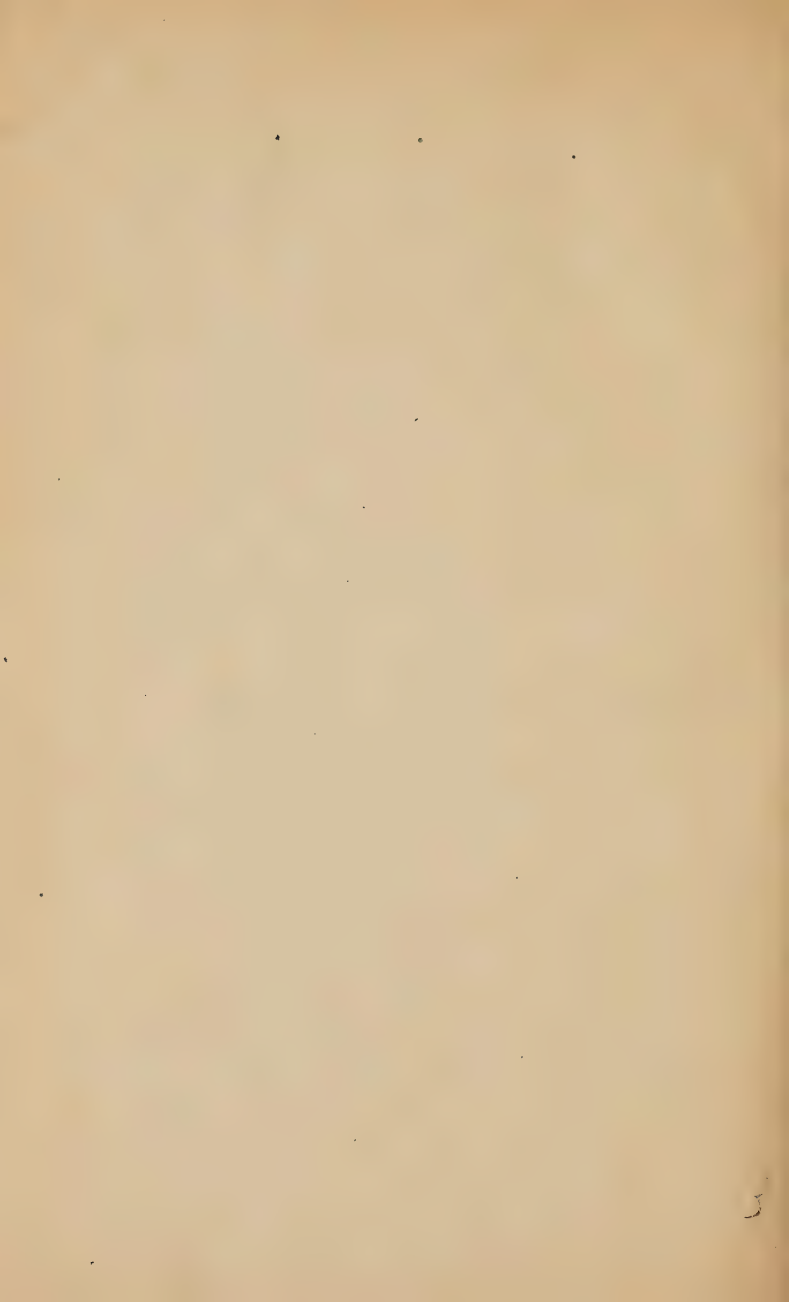
thy with human woe are not wanting. Our blessed Saviour, there is reason to believe, drew near in spirit to those whom he healed, entered by the power of compassion into their sorrows, measured the breadth and depth of their misery, and took as it were upon his own consciousness the full burden of their calamity. The profound and perfect sympathy to which we refer may not be ascribed in so many words to Christ, unless it be where the language of an ancient prophet, "himself took our infirmities and bare our sorrows," is said to have been fulfilled by the work of Christ in healing the sick ; but it is suggested by his bearing on many occasions, and by the elements of his personality. For in him Godhead and manhood were united, divine knowledge and love were joined with human frailties and susceptibilities. The Word became flesh, and could therefore be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

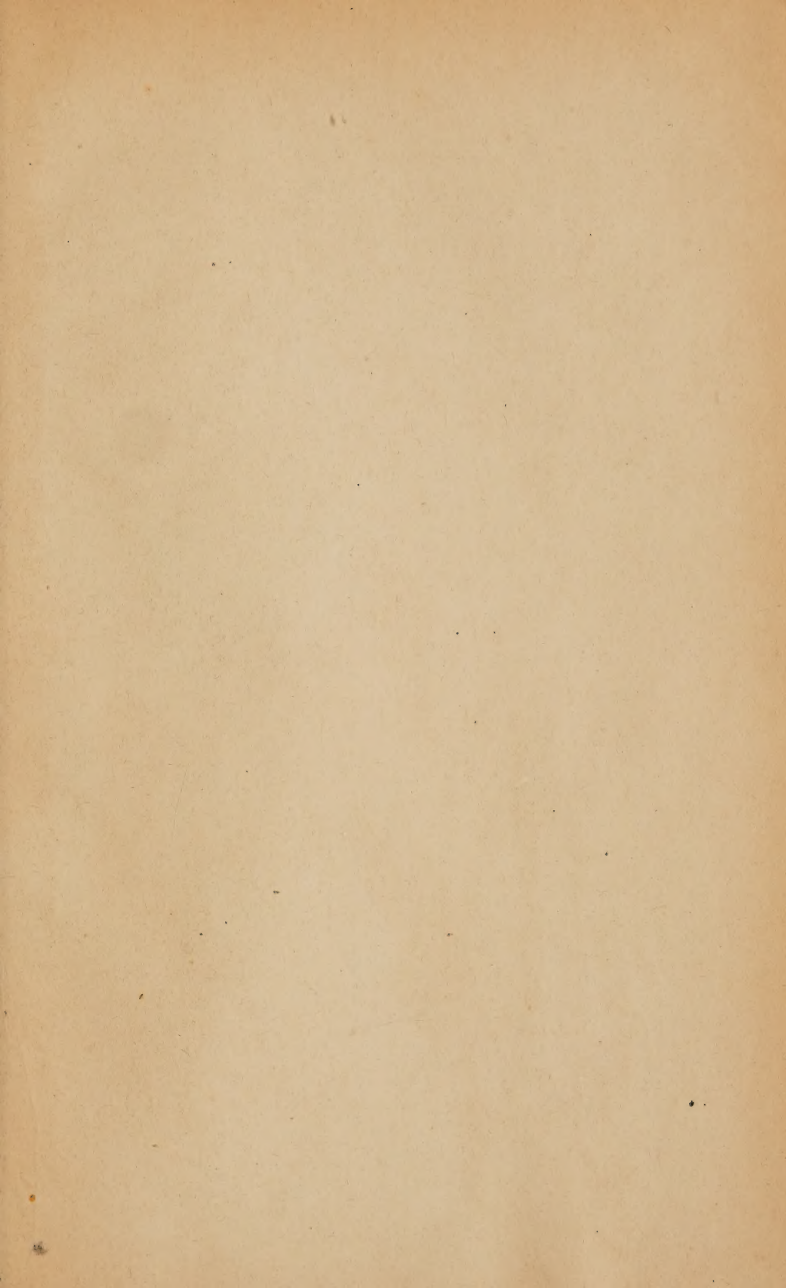
Such was Christ while on earth, as the record of his miracles shows ; and such he is even now in glory. May all who study the record of his mighty works be drawn to him by the love and compassion which they reveal !

NOTE.

At the suggestion of a friend, we refer to pages 48, 49, 77, 277, (note) of this book, and to Matt. iii. 15-17; John xviii. 6, with the context; and Matt. xxvii. 50, sq., in illustration of the statement (p. 271), that Christ "was ever accustomed to offset a special revelation of his human nature by a special revelation of his divine."

THE END. .





DATE DUE

~~APR 3 2 194~~

~~MAY 22 194~~

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01012 6714